



The Institute of Professional Development

'MANAGING IN THE POST PANDEMIC WORLD'

A COLLECTION OF PAPERS ON ASPECTS OF CURRENT
MANAGEMENT

Edited by Dr. Garry Blair
Email: g.blair@inpd.co.uk

“Managing in the Post Pandemic World - A collection of papers on aspects of current management.”



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Authors and their Details (correct as at the date of the papers)

Corresponding Author: Garry Blair – Research Fellow, Institute of Professional Development, Blackthorn House, Appley Bridge, Greater Manchester, United Kingdom. Email: g.blair@inpd.co.uk

Stuart Barratt – Associate Lecturer, Operations, Technology, Events and Hospitality Management, Business School, All Saints Campus, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom.

Peter Betts – Consultant, Manchester, United Kingdom.

Tony Conway – Tutor, Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom.

Lewis Endlar – Lecturer, Business School, Denise Coates Foundation Building, Keele University, Staffordshire, United Kingdom

Ian Grime – Research Leader, Institute of Professional Development, Blackthorn House, Appley Bridge, Greater Manchester, United Kingdom.

Margaret Hyde – Assessor, INPD, Blackthorn House, Appley Bridge, Greater Manchester, United Kingdom.

Rosane Pagano - Principal Lecturer, Operations, Technology, Events and Hospitality Management, Business School, All Saints Campus, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom.

Lynne Turnbull – Researcher, Institute of Professional Development, Blackthorn House, Appley Bridge, Greater Manchester, United Kingdom.

Humza Umair - Lecturer, Marketing, International Business and Tourism, Business School, All Saints Campus, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom.

Helen Woodcock – Associate Lecturer, Operations, Technology, Events and Hospitality Management, Business School, All Saints Campus, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom.

Special Thanks to: Prof. Dr. Anjay Kumar Mishra, Dean, Madhesh University, Nepal-Asia.

Foreword – Dr. Ian Grime

I have worked with Dr Garry Blair for over 20 years in the university and education sector. During this time Garry has been a great source of inspiration and help in delivering and researching management/leadership and project management education.

Garry works alongside me as a research fellow for the Institute of Professional Development. The institute promotes professional development and flexible learning and it conducts effective research that can demonstrate its real-world impact. We have the overarching aim of creating positive, strategic or operational interventions to solve real workplace issues and/or to support development plans for success. Garry's book and other work enormously contributes to this aim by working with organisation and people who are passionate about development.

Garry's knowledge is second to none in taking students on a journey through their education and personal development; and has taught many interesting areas centred around leadership and management.

'Management in the post pandemic world' is an excellent collection of case studies generated through key informant interviews and highlights the key challenges faced by business in this new environment. The assembly of papers introduces key literature in areas such as leadership, risk management, outsourcing, skill development, project management, marketing and green policy. It not only makes useful observations from key informant interviews in numerous industry sectors post-pandemic but also offers readers valid recommendations for business improvement.

Moreover, this collection of articles illustrates (often through frameworks) how the landscape has changed post-pandemic and offers valuable insights to organisations in their strive for business success, and I thoroughly recommend it to practitioners and academics alike.



Foreword – Prof. Dr. Anjay Kumar Mishra, Dean, Madhesh University, Nepal-Asia

In an era marked by unprecedented global challenges, the field of management has undergone a profound transformation, compelling us to reassess traditional practices and embrace innovative strategies. It is with great enthusiasm that the authors introduce "Managing in the Post-Pandemic World: A Collection of Papers on Aspects of Current Management," a timely and essential resource that addresses these shifts and provides valuable insights for navigating the complexities of today's business landscape.

This collection features a diverse range of topics, starting with Agile Leadership, which underscores the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in effective management. Subsequent chapters delve into Risk Management and its frameworks, offering vital strategies for identifying and mitigating risks that organizations face today.

The exploration of Outsourcing highlights how strategic partnerships can enhance operational efficiency, while Skills Development emphasizes the necessity of continuous learning in an evolving job market. Further, the discussions on Managing Global Projects and Public Sector Projects illustrate the unique challenges encountered when managing initiatives across borders and within governmental contexts.

Additionally, the chapters on Agile Marketing Projects and Charity Marketing Initiatives reveal how organizations can leverage agility to meet consumer demands while addressing societal needs. Finally, the emphasis on Green Policy reflects the increasing importance of sustainability within management practices.

This compilation not only captures the current state of management but also offers practical solutions and frameworks for practitioners striving to adapt to a dynamic environment. The insights presented herein are invaluable for leaders at all levels who seek to foster resilience, drive innovation, and ensure sustainable growth within their organizations.

As you embark on this enlightening journey through the pages of this book, may you find inspiration and actionable strategies that empower you to lead effectively in the post-pandemic landscape. Congratulations to all contributors—Garry Blair, Stuart Barratt, Peter Betts, Tony Conway, Lewis Endlar, Ian Grime, Margaret Hyde, Rosane Pagano, Lynne Turnbull, Humza Umair, and Helen Woodcock—on your remarkable contributions; your collective expertise will undoubtedly guide future leaders in navigating the complexities of contemporary management.

Dr. Anjay Kumar Mishra, PhD, Post Doc, D.Litt(s),
Dean, Madhesh University, Nepal

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2803-4918>

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=70NJhYAAAAAJ>

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anjay-Mishra>

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Table of Contents

Section	Topic	Page Number
Foreword Dr. Ian Grime		3
Foreword Prof. Dr. Anjay Kumar Mishra		4
Acknowledgements		5
Introduction		6
List of Published Papers		7
Chapter 1	Agile Leadership	8
Chapter 2	Risk Management	24
Chapter 3	Risk Management Framework	36
Chapter 4	Outsourcing	50
Chapter 5	Skills Development	69
Chapter 6	Managing Global Projects	84
Chapter 7	Public Sector Projects	102
Chapter 8	Agile Marketing Projects	116
Chapter 9	Charity Marketing Initiatives	133
Chapter 10	Green Policy	152
Conclusion		171

Introduction

This publication is a collection of papers on the topic of managing in the post pandemic world. This comprises ten articles, versions of which have been published in journals. A broad range of topics have been covered to reflect the diverse nature of management in the current environment. Leadership and skill development are considered, as well as marketing and outsourcing. Risk management is studied along with running global projects. Aspects of the public and third sectors are highlighted, together with environmental ('Green') policy. The objective was to research a broad range of subjects in order to address the complexity of managing in the post pandemic era and, therefore, contribute to theory and practice in this area.

Dr. Garry Blair
January 2025

Thanks to all of the Journals that have published versions of these articles. The full reference list is shown on the next page.

List of Published Papers

Blair, G., Barratt, S. & Pagano, R. (2022). 'Serving the public in the post pandemic world': A Study of Project Management in the Public Sector. Journal of Advanced Research in Alternative Energy, Environment and Ecology., 09(1&2): 11-18

Blair, G., Barratt, S., & Pagano, R., (2023). Strategies for Agile Leadership in a Challenging Environment. GS Spark: Journal of Applied Academic Discourse. 1(1), 55-66.

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Blair, G., Turnbull, L., Umair, H., Grime, I. & Pagano, R. (2024). 'Selling the Third Sector' - Critical Processes to Create Successful Marketing Initiatives for Charities and Other Nonprofit Organisations. SAIM Journal of Social Science and Technology 1(1), 53-68.

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CHAPTER 1 - Agile Leadership

Strategies for Agile Leadership in a Challenging Environment.

Dr Garry Blair, Stuart Barratt and Dr Rosane Pagano

ABSTRACT:

The post pandemic environment has provided many significant challenges for all forms of organisations. The requirement for good leadership in this context is vital. This research considers the features of such leadership and how their application can affect organisations and their required outputs. The need for agility in this sphere is proposed, in order to accommodate the environmental challenges, globally and within the different sectors. There should be an emphasis on creativity in order to provide solutions to the many issues for organisations in the prevailing environment. Recruitment and retention are viewed as critical activities for sustaining these entities by ensuring the supply of the requisite standard of personnel at all levels. The latter should have suitable qualifications or the aptitude to acquire them. These staff should be given appropriate training then empowered, including being given the scope to utilise their own leadership style, as appropriate. The form of the post pandemic environment and its effects on leadership are noted. The principal factors identified here include the economic challenges, hybrid working patterns and the use of agency staff to supplement the permanent resource. The proactive development of leaders is emphasised as a critical activity for organisations, enabling them to address the issues prevalent in their environment.

Research into this area occurred, using qualitative techniques. A literature review and interview with a current practitioner were performed, in order to glean the data for an inductive analysis. A template to assist organisations in creating a strategy for 'Agile Leadership' was then formulated.

KEYWORDS: Leadership; Agile Leadership; Leadership Style; Recruitment; Staff Retention; Hybrid Working.

1 Introduction

The current global situation provides a challenging environment for all forms of organisations, irrespective of their sector or nationality. The pandemic and other events have changed the characteristics of the international scene to make normal operations more complex. Organisations are forced to consider and accommodate this situation, in order to continue to survive and be successful. The leadership of these entities is viewed as playing a major role in their actions and, hence, the outcomes, given the complexities of their environments. This paper examined recent academic literature and employs a practitioner viewpoint to discern recommendations for managers and other key stakeholders. The concept of 'Agile

Leadership' is suggested as a method to assist in responding to the challenges from operating in such environments.

'Leadership' is defined as, 'Influencing the direction of the organization through a focus on change and inspiring the group to improve performance.' (Needle, 2015: 588). 'Agile' is defined, in respect of business terminology, as being 'able to deal with new situations or changes quickly and successfully' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023).

This research aims to provide a template to assist organisations in developing a strategy for 'Agile Leadership' in order to formulate effective responses to the challenges in their environments.

2 Methodology

A review of a selection of the main academic journals in this area was enacted and suitable articles were identified for analysis. The key themes were noted and were organised using an inductive analysis, forming a hierarchy of categories as required (Blair and Pagano, 2021a and Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). An interview with an experienced manager from the UK public sector, who also managed private sector contracts, took place, in order to ascertain key facets of leadership. Inductive techniques were also employed, in order to organise the interview data. The aim was to make recommendations in terms of managing change in this sphere and to advise practitioners on the topic of improving leadership in their organisations. A template to enable practitioners to create a strategy for 'Agile Leadership' was then constructed from the research findings, comprising a contribution and summary of this work (as per Blair, Pagano and Burns, 2019).

3 Literature Review

The principal themes were discerned from a selection of current articles on leadership in key publications. These were obtained using inductive methods, without a predetermined coding structure.

3.1 Agile Practice

Organisations can be more effective in respect of all aspects if they adopt practices based on Agile Project Management, according to Rigby et al. (2022). The focus should be on delivering value to customers with income-generation being a consequence of this emphasis, rather than the primary attention being given to profit-making. The initial move can be to create a single workgroup into Agile practice. This team should comprise multidisciplinary personnel, with experts from outside the normal remit of the group. The premise is that this will stimulate the thinking and lead to a more innovative approach to the team's brief. A microcosm of the desired practices for the organisation is, thus, created. This should also enable experimentation, so that testing occurs on the team. The focus should be on delivering value to selected shareholders, rather than concentrating principally on profit maximisation. These arrangements should be based on the Agile team unit, consistent with the premise that investing in the team and networking yields higher benefits than solely targeting the development of individual employees. Leadership

that invests in Agile teams will, hence, create enhanced organisations, according to this source.

The importance of an agile strategy is stressed by Mankins and Gottfredson (2022). Many organisations adhere to a single strategic plan, defined and then followed over a set period, such as three years. This is only satisfactory in a stable environment, where assumptions can be made that endure throughout the period. This article suggests that volatility is now the norm, in respect of organisational contexts. Major events such as the Covid pandemic, the UK exit from the European Union, the conflict in the Ukraine and environmental disasters, have led to unstable operating conditions on a global scale. The practice of dynamic strategic planning is recommended, where plans and options are continually re-evaluated and revised over time. The requirement to consider more than one possible future, embracing even extreme views of the future environment, is noted. The number of alternatives considered should be limited, so that resources are not squandered on trying to cover every possible option, leaving the organisation in a worse financial position. Several studies from practice are cited by the authors, in order to illustrate their points. The need for a flexible strategy, considering several options and employing constant review and adjustment, is highlighted. The advantage of this is that the organisation should improve its capacity to accommodate rapid change in a volatile environment. The selection of alternative options can lead to significant advantages over competitors and provision of products and services during challenging operating conditions.

The importance of the time factor in projects and the role of leaders in addressing that element are considered by Siddiquei et al. (2022). An empirical study of over 50 project teams in four companies running similar projects over several weeks was held and the results analysed for this article. A survey of the project team members was used to provide the research results. The effect of leaders' communications regarding the proposed duration of tasks in the planning stage of the project and reminders of deadlines during the execution stage were considered. A systems view of projects was utilised, comprising inputs, processing and outputs. The determination of inputs was the initiation and planning phases with the processing being the execution phase. The output stage was that of delivery of goods and services. The study demonstrated that leaders can influence the project teams' work in the initiation and planning stages with their inputs on project tasks and their planned duration. This research also showed that leaders can influence the project teams' work by sending reminders throughout the execution phase, in an attempt to ensure that deadlines are met. The ability to set time parameters for project work and encourage adherence to them is viewed as being of critical importance to obtaining successful project outcomes. The leader, therefore, needs to understand the project tasks and desired outcomes, in order to have a significant effect on project work via critical input at the initial and processing stages.

3.2 Networks

The importance of forming and maintaining networks is stated by Ibarra and Hunter (2022). The aim for prospective leaders is to practice strategic networking, rather than solely operational networking. The latter entails developing a series of contacts

at work to perform projects and routine or periodic tasks. These are usually prescribed by the required functions and type of work and are commonly internal to the organisation. Strategic and personal networks are more discretionary and are developed to accommodate different requirements. Personal networks are contacts developed through leisure interests and hobbies. These are individuals who share a common interest, although there may be a strategic element here, if personal connections can align with work interests, for example by providing a reference or introduction or even directly recruiting the contact. Strategic networking is the primary form of leadership advancement and operation. These are usually outside the individual's work contacts and possibly external to the organisation. These strategic contacts provide a resource that assists in envisioning and executing routine and project tasks, in order to maintain and enhance the status of the organisation and possibly the individual themselves. Operational networks tend to be focussed on technology and techniques, with individuals solving routine and irregular problems. Strategic networks, however, tend to focus on the positioning of the organisation in its environment. Membership of the latter can be disparate in terms of skills and knowledge. This may be advantageous, providing a range of resources and perspectives to help the individuals and organisation to achieve their objectives. The ability to build a supportive strategic network is viewed as being critical to organisations and individuals, in respect of the practice of leadership and delivery of key work activities.

3.3 Leadership Techniques

The two leadership techniques of maintaining absolute control of decision-making and delegating decisions to the group via empowerment are considered (Greer et al., 2023). These are described as the 'two leadership gears'. The premise is that the optimum situation is for organisations and their leaders to utilise both of these methods, depending on the circumstances. These authors' empirical work, based on decision-making in organisations, suggests that the best-performing organisations are those where the leaders can successfully switch from one method to the other, depending on the requirements of the activities. An example is to delegate power to the group for idea-generation activities, so that the activity benefits from the maximum available input, and then switch to authoritarian method when a final selection of the idea for implementation is required. The switching between these two methods must be clearly indicated. Strategies for successfully empowering staff are suggested, such as the leader leaving the group during the relevant period or having limited involvement. The objective is to allow each member of the group to have equal authority, thus enabling any of them to contribute to the discussion, and, hence, maximise the contribution of the group. Organisations should match the appropriate method to the circumstances, therefore, optimising decision-making and possibly generating group support.

The ability to change perspective on organisational issues is viewed as a critical asset for leaders by Kanter (2023). This article suggests that both the near view and the more distant view have their advantages and disadvantages. These actions are described as 'zooming in' and 'zooming out'. The problem is that leaders tend to adopt one or the other stance, as dictated by the demands of their roles and organisations. This can lead to flawed decision-making, with serious consequences

for the individual and the organisation. This is illustrated via a discussion of several cases from practice. The 'near' perspective is viewed as personal management, where personal contacts are heavily utilised in order to perform tasks and situations are viewed from a personal perspective. This is advantageous in non-routine situations or specific cultures where the leader's attention and influence is required to achieve satisfactory outcomes. Leaders who adhere to this approach lack strategic perspective and comprehension of the wider environmental issues and can have problems if there are changes in this sphere that affect the local context, where their attention is focussed. Leaders who adopt a purely strategic perspective may miss issues occurring at the local level that require intervention or comprehension, in order to solve particular problems or understand key issues. The optimum leader is, hence, viewed as being able to switch from a 'near' to 'far' perspective, in order to accommodate all viewpoints and engage in effective decision-making. The method for initiating this dual viewpoint is for the leader to question their interpretations of situations, in order to comprehend the perspective that they are applying and encourage the alternate view, so that they attain a more complete understanding of the situation, namely attending to both the strategic and local spheres.

Zaman et al. (2021) investigated the effects of authoritarian leadership on public sector mega construction projects, namely those that are large scale, complex, capital intensive in nature with multiple stakeholders. These authors surveyed over 300 professionals who were working on a large infrastructure project. This research examined the link between project success and authoritarian leadership, considering the effects on the project team members in terms of their 'silence' in respect of contribution to the project. The latter refers to project workers failing to communicate and withholding their input, ideas and views. This is usually to the detriment of the project outcomes and is caused, possibly, by alienation from the project. The attitude of authoritarian leaders means that some of the project workers disengage from the project, hence, maintain 'silence', restricting their contribution. Communication is 'one way', in the form of direct instructions from the leader to the project workers. The flow of communications in the opposite direction was, thus, seen to be restricted. This was viewed as having a negative effect on the success of the project outcomes, on several levels. Success was measured from three perspectives, namely project management (adherence to the project plan), project ownership (fulfilment of the project business case) and project investment (value generated by the investment in the project). The conclusion of this study was that authoritarian leadership negatively impacted project success, with the lack of communication from project workers being a major factor in this outcome.

The beneficial effects of shared leadership on project success are considered by Imam and Zaheer (2021). This article focussed on researching completed IT projects in a developing country. The rationale was that the high failure rate prevalent in projects in such countries could be examined for mitigating circumstances. IT projects were viewed as being complex and requiring the coordination of different skills to achieve completion. This increased the dependency on teamwork. Over 200 IT professionals were surveyed to obtain the results. The premise employed by these authors was that shared leadership was more effective in this area, comprising Agile Project Management techniques of creating prototypes by collaborative effort then refining them based on the customer's perspective (as per Highsmith, 2004).

The research results demonstrated that shared leadership was more likely to lead to project success. The factors of team knowledge-sharing, mutual trust and team cohesion were found to be important in achieving successful outcomes. This research suggested that project workers were more committed to obtaining solutions if they shared the project leadership, otherwise they restricted themselves to their individual efforts in their prescribed area of expertise. This shared leadership also helped with making sense of requirements, including changes of scope and user needs. The suggestion was that when potential leaders are recruited, the ability to comfortably share leadership should be prioritised. The empowered team, operating a shared leadership model, was thus viewed as being essential to the successful delivery of complex IT solutions, that depended on a mix of different skills.

3.4 Crisis Management

Leadership in extreme circumstances is considered by Ramanna (2023), described as the 'age of outrage'. Stakeholders can adopt a severe attitude in the case of problems, strongly promoting their own viewpoint and criticising the organisation. They can also take an antagonistic viewpoint, seeking to make gains from another party. This can originate from a sense of unfairness with society, based on a belief that prevailing systems are biased against individuals or groups. This can apply to areas such as race, finance and politics. The use of social media can also encourage extreme views by permitting their expression and encouragement by others. The strategies to deal with such situations commence with an attempt to de-escalate the situation then resolve it by analysis followed by response or a decision not to respond. A range of options are available, including the use or threatened use of power by leaders. An appeal to supporters can also be used, thus employing personal contacts or 'position power', based on the role as leader. A potentially superior option was identified, in the form of an appeal to the culture of the organisation or group. This could take the form of requesting that the protagonists suggest their own solution to the issue. This may permit a solution to be found without the leader using coercive power or having to request favours from contacts in their network. A consensus of all parties is generally viewed as the optimum solution as it reduces the scope for dissatisfaction with the outcome. The critical activity for a leader is to analyse the situation and select the optimum response. Failure to do this may lead to further antagonism of stakeholders, due to a sub-optimal solution, with a consequent impact on the organisation. The relative power of the parties and nature of the specific context are vital factors in considering this decision. It is important to continue to assess the situation and develop resilience in terms of seeking solutions and formulating future leadership strategy.

The ability to address issues in a political environment is considered by Kteily and Finkel (2022). The problem of employees being in conflict with the organisation and each other as a result of differing political views is discussed. Examples of employees reacting adversely to actions by their organisations are given. The latter resulted in staff leaving the company and reputational damage, in some cases. The key problem is that leaders are not trained to address such issues. Attempts to suppress political debate can exacerbate the situation and appear to preserve the status quo, hence be viewed as essentially conservative. The differences are centred on the premise that an individual's political views motivate their actions and

decisions. They can also affect their perceptions of organisational aspects, such as recruitment. The rights to 'free speech' and freedom of expression are regarded as being essential by many cultures and individuals.

The solution proposed is to prepare employees at the induction and initial training phase. The policies regarding such items can be outlined. Another tactic is to get employees with opposing views to collaborate on projects and tasks, with the remit of producing the optimum outcome. It is also important to have the metrics available to counter or confirm arguments over potentially contentious issues, such as ethnicity and orientation of staff. The central issue is that organisations are part of society so cannot avoid the politicised debates that ensue. The key leadership strategy is to be aware of this situation and prepared, both in terms of policy, briefing employees and responses to such issues. Failure to do this may result in serious problems for the organisation from an internal and external perspective.

The critical area of managing a crisis on behalf of the organisation is considered by Pearson et al. (2023). This article is based on an interview with leading academic, who is an expert in this area. The problem of highly competitive environments causing increased potential for errors, as resources are reduced and expectations increased in terms of outputs, is highlighted. The time for response has also been reduced, as communications have become more effective. The news of a major crisis is very likely to be communicated quickly into the public domain, thanks to social media and online news sources. The increased speed of online communications has, thus, reduced the time available for leaders to prepare a response to any potential crisis. The competitive environment and interests of stakeholders mean that speculation and opinion may rapidly follow any news of a crisis, with potentially damaging effects for the organisation, in terms of reputation and share value, for example. The increased level of globalisation could also be a critical factor in a crisis. The global nature of organisations and their environment means that any crisis has an additional layer of complexity. This can create communications' problems in respect of translating instructions to staff. The need is for clear directives and trusted delegates to transmit messages and manage locally, as required. The notion of one leader addressing the crisis in isolation or with a small, selected project team could now be viewed as outdated. Leaders need to delegate to the appropriate experts or work with them in order to coordinate a response to the crisis. Technology can assist with communications but may also be a hindrance in that electronic devices distract attention and reduce the ability for prolonged concentration. This may cause issues with the response to the crisis. The assignment of a project team to address the crisis may cause problems in the organisation, for example in rewarding those staff afterwards and the effects on the staff who have covered their tasks for the period of secondment. The notion that risk avoidance measures can reduce the chances of a potential crisis also has consequences. The reduction of risk may lead to a reduction of opportunities for development, so the organisation loses these benefits and perhaps falls behind competitors.

Dealing with a crisis, thus, requires preparation for a response. The leader and key staff should be briefed on the format of the response. This could include draft statements for media channels, formation of response team, definition of roles and

communication mechanisms. The response and potential solutions may be facilitated by such preparation and, thus, the effects of the crisis be mitigated. The importance of identifying key staff and working collaboratively on the crisis situation is viewed as being essential. Delegating appropriate tasks is also vital to providing an effective response, in many cases.

3.5 Recruitment

The importance of having a leadership team that can make strategic progress with the organisation is highlighted by Leinwand et al. (2022). These authors propose that the leadership team should focus on changes to the organisation, defining a new strategy to anticipate demand and take advantage of opportunities, rather than just manage the current situation in the prevailing environment.

The necessity is to recruit the appropriate personnel to the required roles on the leadership team. These may be new roles, based on the anticipated needs of the organisation. The key point is to have the requisite leaders in these roles to supply the expertise for future strategies. These new posts should be full members of the leadership team and not external to it, hence indicating the commitment to these areas. Digitisation is often viewed as one of these critical change areas but these authors suggest that organisations require leadership in more spheres. This may lead to removal of existing leadership team members, as the focus on strategy is emphasised. The requirement, according to this article, is to be prepared to reinvent the organisation, in respect of its purpose, methods, culture and accepted practice. This is to address the challenges of the current and future operating environment. Failure to implement these changes may cause stagnation, the reduction in scale and even the closure of the organisation, as the leadership team rely on an outdated rationale in a changed environment. 'Reinventing' this team to implement future strategies should, therefore, be an ongoing process. This 'future orientation' approach is viewed as being vital for the leadership team to adopt, for the ongoing health of the enterprise.

4 Findings

A senior manager from the public sector with a remit that covered health, education and social services, who also had responsibility for private sector contracts, was interviewed. The aim was to discuss the key elements of effective leadership in the current environment. A semi-structured interview was held, thus allowing the respondent more licence to contribute their own perspective to the discussion. A thematic analysis of the interview results was then performed, using inductive methods. The main points were then presented and these findings were referenced to the literature, in order to further analyse the outcomes. A series of recommendations was then formulated as a template to assist practitioners and contribute to this research area.

4.1 Recruitment

The importance of recruitment in terms of selecting an organisation's leaders is stated in the literature (Leinwand et al., 2022).

4.1.1 Qualifications

The respondent stated, 'Leaders need appropriate qualifications and values'. An appropriate Masters' degree and ethical values were given as examples. The requirement for formal qualifications as an indicator of ability to lead is viewed as being essential. Lack of such qualifications may even disqualify potential candidates. The appropriate ethical values are regarded as vital for leaders, emphasising the social and environmental perspectives. This will ensure that the organisation provides a progressive, supportive context for its stakeholders. Training is considered in Blair and Pagano (2021a).

4.1.2 Proportion of Agency Staff

The variety of employment mix, in respect of the proportion of full to part-time staff, was noted by the respondent,

'Some areas (for example London) there are a majority of agency staff - others have more 'home-grown' staff.'

This refers to the percentage of personnel brought in on contracts via an agency, rather than developed from the organisation's own staff. The greater the local pay differential between regular staff remuneration and agency rates, the more problematic it is to retain staff in leadership and project leadership roles. This forces the organisation to use agency staff and pay these premium rates. The activity of outsourcing is considered in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2022).

4.2 Networks

Networking is viewed as a critical activity by several references, such as Ibarra and Hunter (2022).

4.2.1 Empowering Leadership

'The move has been to less hierarchical, empowering, distributed leadership models.' The aim is to distribute power and responsibility to staff, so that leadership is a more collective activity. The trend is towards 'flatter', less hierarchical forms of organisation. This leads to more empowered teams, where members have equal status and are primarily responsible for their own work.

4.3 Leadership Techniques

Leadership techniques are viewed as vital by several sources (for example, Greer et al., 2023).

4.3.1 Leadership Development

'Important to grow your own leaders, as recruitment and retention are the major challenges', according to the respondent. The need to have an effective policy on

recruitment, retention and succession planning was suggested. Competition in the employment market means that staff who have been trained and given experience as leaders are attractive to other organisations and may also be tempted to work as self-employed contractors, for greater rewards. It was suggested that a realistic assessment needs to be made for these staff, in that they will probably have shorter employment periods than other staff, as they move to more lucrative jobs elsewhere. Training personnel, for example in a virtual environment, is indicated in Blair and Pagano (2021c).

4.3.2 Problem-Solving

Problem-solving and creativity in a work environment is essential for leaders. The input of new ideas for the organisation should be stimulated by the leaders. This is summarised by the respondent, as 'the need to innovate and the ability to experiment to obtain novel solutions is important.'

The role of technology to solve organisational problems and support activities is addressed in Blair, Grant and Woodcock (2020). The key areas in respect of managing and implementing technology are identified in Blair and Pagano (2023) and Blair, Morris and Pagano (2023).

4.3.3 Hybrid Working

There has been a move to 'hybrid' working in terms of location, comprising work at home and in the office. This has been a consequence of the pandemic, when restrictions on movement led to an increase in virtual working (mentioned in Blair and Pagano, 2020). The respondent indicated that this has been accompanied by a change to measurement of work performance. 'Use outcomes and outputs, comprising added value, rather than hours worked. Financial and non-financial outcomes are used, depending on the circumstances.' This statement details the position. The tendency has been to move away from 'recorded hours worked' as an indicator and towards measures of contributions to value. This focuses work more directly on productivity, in terms of results, rather than attendance.

4.3.4 Individual Style and Progression

'Important to allow staff to have their own styles. Also give opportunities for development and progression.' The suggestion is that staff should be allowed discretion to utilise their own styles of leadership, as appropriate. Opportunities for career progression should be available in order to provide incentives for the staff. The facility to permit self-expression as a leader, within the cultural context of the organisation, is important as it both encourages a broader range of management development as well as inspiring loyalty, as these personnel are given a remit to exhibit their own personal style.

4.4 Crisis Management

The requirement to accommodate challenging environments and develop the ability manage any crises is regarded as paramount by many authors (for instance, Pearson et al., 2023).

4.4.1 Economic Environment

The challenges of the local and global economic conditions were mentioned. The problem of reduced capital programme budgets and high interest rates, increasing the cost of borrowing, was outlined. The costs of the pandemic and the conflict in the Ukraine, for example adversely affecting energy costs, have caused a real reduction in funds for projects. This is stated as, 'Economic conditions may lead to reduction in budgets, such as for capital programmes, leading to a decrease in project work.'

This aspect should be reflected in strategy formulation (as per Blair, Barratt and Pagano, 2021). The need to consider the sustainability aspects of operating in the environment are also noted, especially in respect of the use of technology (Blair and Pagano, 2021b),

4.5 Agile Practice

The incorporation of Agile practices into the leadership of organisations is emphasised in the literature (Rigby et al., 2022 and in respect of time management, Siddiquei et al., 2022).

4.5.1 Agile Leadership

'You need to be an agile leader, prepared to adapt to circumstances', according to the respondent. The importance of using a flexible approach with work, projects and staff, for example, was stressed. The need to use tactics that are based on a contingent perspective, in order to accommodate changing circumstances, was highlighted. The latter could include: global issues, such as trade or funding variations; organisational issues, such as changes in policy or senior personnel; and local issues, such as the requirements of a variety of staff, with different needs and motivations.

Agility in terms of leadership means being flexible, in respect of using different approaches in response to different circumstances. This will require the leader to understand the range of options and their potential impact, as well as be able to gauge the decision-making environment, in order to select the appropriate option.

The requirement to scan the environment for potential issues and opportunities, thus managing risks, is addressed (in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2021). The agile approach involves the identification of potential change and its implementation using flexible change management techniques (as per Blair, Barratt and Pagano, 2022).

5 Discussion

This research can be summarised with a template to help to formulate a strategy for 'Agile Leadership'. This is based on the principal areas identified during the study and is intended as a contribution to practice and change management in this area. The following recommendations are, thus, presented (see Diagram 1).

- a) Agile practice means using a flexible approach, therefore select the best option, based on the culture and environmental circumstances.
- b) Promote Agile techniques, using prototyping with expert opinion to refine the end product or service.
- c) Build up supportive networks inside and outside the organisation to assist in key areas, therefore supplementing skills, experience and knowledge.
- d) Empower your staff to allow creativity and ensure commitment in teamworking.
- e) Develop leaders from in-house staff and supplement this with policies on recruitment, retention and succession planning.
- f) Leaders should excel at problem-solving and be comfortable working in a hybrid environment, with employees at home and on site.
- g) Leaders should be able to switch between authoritarian decision-making and delegating decisions, as appropriate.
- h) Have a plan to manage crises and a mechanism for detecting them and responding.
- i) Ensure appropriate leaders are recruited in terms of skills, knowledge and attitude.
- j) Introduce staff to the methods and expectations of the organisation from recruitment to induction and ongoing professional development.
- k) Hire temporary staff as necessary, to ensure delivery of objectives.
- l) Ensure that all key work has a time plan which has the proactive backing of the leaders.

Diagram 1. Template for Creating a Strategy for Agile Leadership

The principal themes are considered, namely: Agile Practice; Crisis Management; Leadership Techniques; Recruitment; Networks. These comprised the main themes identified in the research, both empirical and the literature review.

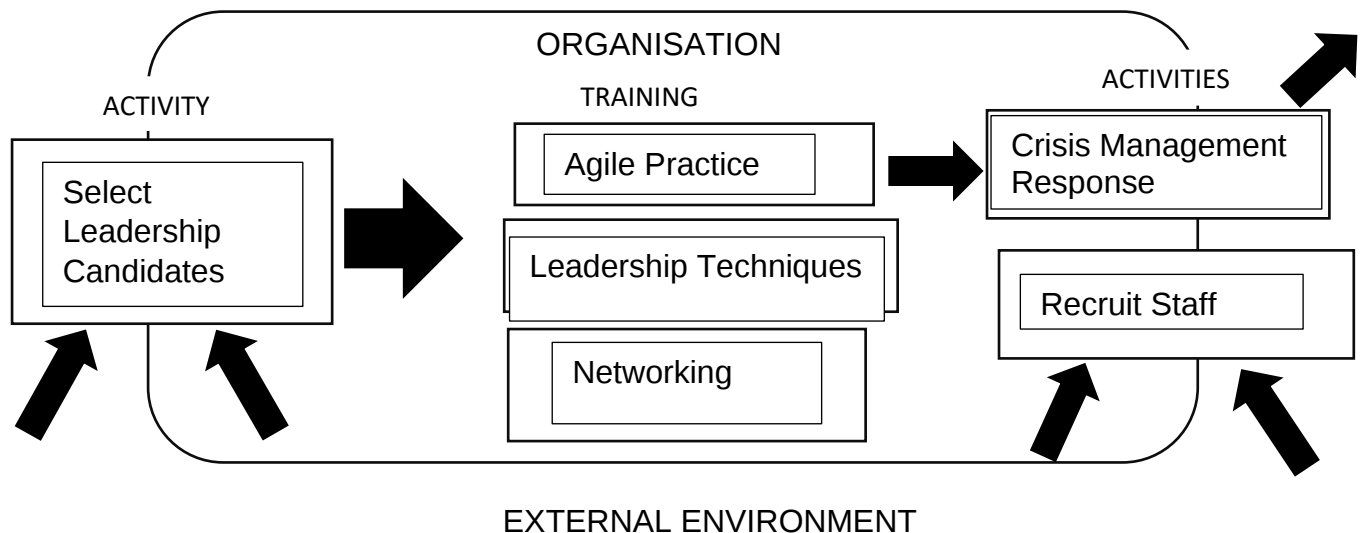


Diagram 2. Strategy for Agile Leadership – Key Activities

The key activities of a strategy for Agile Leadership are illustrated (see Diagram 2). Suitable leadership candidates should be selected, potentially from outside or within the organisation. These candidates should receive training and experience in respect of Agile Practice, Leadership Techniques and Networking. A response for managing a possible crisis should be determined and appropriate staff recruited from inside and outside the environment. Recommendations for practitioners were produced from these themes and presented in the template, as previously stated.

6 Conclusion

This research comprises an attempt to gain a current perspective on leadership, using empirical work and a review of the literature. The findings are summarised as recommendations for practitioners and a possible agenda for change management. The study could be extended by further research into different sectors, accessing a range of practitioners in different global locations.

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Dr Garry Blair
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CHAPTER 2 - Risk Management

Risk Management in the Post Pandemic Business Environment.

Dr Garry Blair, Helen Woodcock and Dr Rosane Pagano

ABSTRACT:

The requirement to address risk in the prevailing business environment has been accentuated due to the constraints of the pandemic. It is proposed that the nature of risk context has been fundamentally altered by the global events of COVID. This paper provides a perspective that is based on an exploratory study of the identification and addressing of risk, in terms of business projects.

A review of the literature has been undertaken and the key themes for the study topic identified. A senior manager, who is responsible for risk management at a company that runs international projects, was interviewed in an empirical study. A thematic analysis was performed, employing an inductive approach, in this research into a single case. The aim was to contribute to the prevailing literature and enhance understanding of the post pandemic business environment, in respect of risk management.

The principal questions concerning risk and risk management are discerned. The objective is to consider risk in the post pandemic environment, in order to improve understanding of the issues relevant to business. The requirement to address these issues is also covered, with an attempt to determine the main themes from the research, in order to assist practitioners.

The use of technology to support business continuity and achieve business objectives during the pandemic is discussed. An articulation of Lewin's change model is proposed to summarise this work and assist in the comprehension of the contemporary situation.

KEYWORDS: Risk, Risk Management, Contingency, Business Continuity, Novel Risk, Change Management.

1 Introduction

The definition of risk is provided as, 'the possibility of incurring misfortune or loss' [1]. This focuses on the negative effects of risk, thus subscribing to a view of attempting to protect the organisation from the consequences. A further statement is made by Maylor [2] as 'We can view risk as a 'trade-off'. This could comprise the consideration of the costs of mitigating or preventing the risk against the costs of the risk occurring. This could also constitute the cost of risk against potential reward,

helping to determine the potential net outcomes for the organisation. The latter allows a positive perspective of risk, such as a positive sales return or investment, gleaned as a reward for the risk taken. Risk can also be viewed as the probability of an event occurring, acknowledging a degree of uncertainty as to occurrence and, potentially, the outcome of this event. The potential impact of the risk on the organisation will assist in an appraisal and the resultant actions taken.

Risk can also be viewed in terms of bringing new products to market in a 'first mover' strategy. The company thus accepts the risk of leading development, in respect of costs and potential sales. The importance of leadership is stated, as "a risk-taking ethos that is supported by top management" [3].

The primary motivation for this paper is to understand the risk environment, following the pandemic, and consider the appropriate methods to address the resultant risks to the organisation. Risk responses are viewed as being determined by the possible impact on the business. The risks that are discerned as having a high impact on the business and are highly likely to occur should, thus, be covered with plans for the appropriate response to prevent or reduce the possible effects.

The identification of risk is viewed as a critical activity, in this respect. The range of sources of risk, internal and external to the organisation and its partners and in the environment, hence, need to be detected in order to quantify an appropriate response. The components of the organisation, such as people, technology, finance, structure and materials, can all be viewed as potential sources of risk.

2 Methodology

This research was enacted using qualitative methods to obtain interpretations of risk management in the post pandemic environment ([4] and [5]). A semi-structured interview was held with an industry practitioner, in order to obtain a perspective on this topic. The interview recording was analysed, utilising an inductive approach. Key themes were discerned from the data and categorised without a prepared coding structure. This was done in order to gain a novel perspective on the data, avoiding the potential bias of a predetermined coding structure.

A literature review was undertaken and a similar technique was employed, in order to process the data. A thematic analysis was enacted and the results were categorised into groupings, to facilitate understanding (as per [6]).

A summary of the potential contribution to practice was thus provided, with the theoretical basis being stated in the form of an adaptation of Lewin's original change model [7], considering this study's findings (as per [8]).

3 Literature Review

It is proposed that the changes to the business environment, identified as key themes in the literature, have also engendered changes to the nature of the

accompanying risks and hence require new risk management strategies to accommodate these circumstances.

3.1 Issues with Response to COVID

The problem of issues originating from the response to COVID-19 and the accompanying restrictions was identified [9]. This principally relates to the efforts to utilise technology to continue organisational activity. The effects on individuals are highlighted, as a consequence of this technology-led response. Inequality has been created, due to disparities in income and technical skills. Some jobs benefitted from homeworking via online provision but others did not and this has led to financial penalties, including the removal of these jobs, for the period of restrictions and beyond, in some cases. The move to online working caused stress due to the requirements of understanding the technology. The change to online teaching also affected the supply of the workforce. Lack of equipment, suitable home space and domestic support could be identified as affecting the standard of education of the student population, to varying degrees. The movement of some jobs to online homeworking tended to occur in the case of the higher-skilled employment. Manual work and other jobs with less technical content were affected more significantly by the measures to combat the pandemic. This led to redundancies and reductions in pay, including the UK furlough scheme (where workers who could no longer attend their workplace were paid a percentage of their salary, supported by the government and their employer). The use of automation to replace labour, for example in factories and distribution centres, was given impetus by these circumstances.

The psychological consequences of such changes were also specified. Isolation and online bullying were cited as two such aspects of increased virtual activity. The lack of socialisation, issues with the home environment, tendency to overwork and lack of separation between domestic and work spheres were viewed as potentially generating negative psychological effects.

The occurrence of physical problems, either now or in the future, were identified as a possible symptom of working from home. These are caused by the unsuitability of the home in respect of the requisite ergonomics of a work environment.

The security of systems was also noted as a fundamental concern, arising from the measures to accommodate the restrictions of the pandemic [10]. The movement away from regular workplaces to homeworking could potentially cause security issues. The usage of domestic broadband, for example, together with a less secure domestic environment, could permit security breaches, through accidental or malicious means. Lack of technical skills, training and support were also potential issues, identified in respect of this environment.

Problems with communication of the need for self-isolation, due to possible infection, were stated. The use of software applications (such as the NHS App in the UK) to send these instructions via mobile devices has led to excessive numbers of people being sent the messages. This has created workforce shortages, caused by workers

needlessly being told to self-isolate, in different sectors, as the economy recovers from the effects of the pandemic.

3.2 Barriers to Learning

The requirement was for organisations to attempt to 'learn' rapidly, in order to respond effectively to the new situation. The literature identifies potential 'barriers' to learning that could inhibit the organisational response to the amended business environment [11]. One of the main areas identified was that success could be envisaged as problematic, in that organisations could fail to learn from this outcome. The latter prevented a thorough appraisal of the situation and led to overconfidence and an inability to apply necessary changes to ensure continued success. The tendency was to attribute success to internal factors, such as talent and correct strategy, rather than external circumstances. A trend was also observed for powerful individuals in the organisation to fail to consult or take advice, particularly in the context of success. It was identified as discouraging reflection in senior management. The implicit assumption was that seniority meant that the manager did not need to learn from their subordinates and even that it may be a sign of weakness. The important aspect was to examine success and use data to understand, in the same manner as a failure would be analysed.

It is proposed that there is a bias towards success. The requirement to destigmatise failure was noted, so that it could be accepted and analysed. Organisations that take this approach are able to stimulate learning and facilitate the cancellation of failing projects, thereby saving resources. This approach encourages a more positive environment, where risk-taking is encouraged, rather than a fear of failure inhibiting the initiation of potential, beneficial projects.

The inherent bias in organisations was identified as being towards action and conformity. The bias to action leads to exhaustion of the assets of the business, especially the human assets, and a dearth of reflection in the business processes. The requirement for a pause in activity to accommodate a suitable period of post-action review was stated. The need to conform to internal and external expectations and standards is viewed as another driver that inhibits change. The requirement to maintain variations of behaviour within set standards will thus restrict the scope of change.

The use of external experts is also cited as a possible inhibitor of organisational learning. This is borne of a narrow view of expertise, where the opinions of subject matter experts from outside the organisation are given greater validity than those of the staff. The resultant actions are likely to reinforce the established rationale, rather than stimulate innovation, as these experts are likely to have similar qualifications and experience in their professional areas. The suggestion is that the workforce should be regarded as experts, in their own spheres, and be developed via training and being given a varied experience in the organisation.

The key to organisational learning was viewed as implementing project reviews and

recognising the appropriate timescales for decisions, in terms of obtaining feedback [12]. The notion is proposed that replication of actions in the organisation does not constitute learning, so it is important to experiment in order to generate improvement, as well as analysing performance, irrespective of the outcomes.

The issue of large organisations being 'risk averse' was also mentioned [13]. The problem was viewed as being the allocation of decisions to middle managers, whose careers could be affected by the outcome of a single decision. The requirement to encourage risk-taking and reduce the personal aspects, in terms of responsibility, was proposed.

3.3 Solutions

Potential solutions were offered, in the form of creating a 'learning' environment within organisations in order to address the risks created by the pandemic and accompanying restrictions.

Team resilience was identified as an important factor for organisations to consider [14]. The tendency for teams to be placed under additional pressure, due to the pandemic, increases the importance of this area. Examples of the disruptive elements are: restrictions on movement, perhaps leading to increased virtual communications; economic issues that affect profit, so reduce operations; and removal of team members for health reasons. A practitioner survey of project teams was analysed to produce definitions of team resilience. It was determined that trust was required, in two forms: cognition-based; and affect-based. The former was founded on perceptions of competence, reliability and dependability, thus comprising a view of professionalism in respect of work. The latter was based on care and concern between team members, thus constituting the emotional connections. This research noted that cognition-based trust was required before affect-based trust could be formed. The outcome, in terms of team effectiveness, was defined as 'group potency', namely the ability to perform effectively as a team. This was viewed as determining team resilience, in respect of coping with conflict and pressure in projects.

A qualitative study of a large project, termed a 'megaproject', was accessed in order to contribute to this research [15]. The subject comprised a stalled project, namely the Lyon-Turin High Speed Railway. This source examined the range of key skills required to complete the project, identified as including strategic planning, construction of legislation, diplomacy, politics, socio-technical, negotiation and legal competences. These were viewed as necessary in order to facilitate the successful delivery of the project. The latter involved international cooperation to deliver the transport system and was stalled, as local objections to the plans resulted in legal issues. The requirement for the successful application of negotiating skills and legal support was thus highlighted. The scope of the project demanded resources at many levels, including international diplomacy, project management, industry and local citizen agreements. Problems in key areas led to the halting of progress on this megaproject. The need to address the concerns of key stakeholders, in terms of value creation for example, was therefore a critical risk identified in this literature [16].

The use of systems to reduce and control risk is proposed [17]. These can allow flexible working, with the employment of mobile systems to allow the workforce to be connected via centralised collation of data into the data repositories for analysis, for instance. The monitoring function can thus be fulfilled, allowing control of a distributed workforce to be enacted. Work activities can thus be recorded easily, with service and sales targets and budgets being readily updated, via mobile devices which are used to capture data from operatives to update central systems, located at headquarters, for instance. Data can be transmitted at several points in the process, so progress with key tasks can be recorded and measured against the prescribed standards. The system data can thus be used to indicate areas of potential risk via pre-programmed indicators. Failure to respond to a request for information could, for example, be used as an indicator of risk, with an escalation procedure provided, to be applied as appropriate.

The aim is to engender trust in the system and the associated processes. The information movements accommodate a distributed workforce and allow control, via individual and group target-setting, performance and standard monitoring. The dual objectives of management control and agent autonomy can therefore be achieved, using systems to deliver real-time, auditable information to all users.

3.4 Coping with Novel Risk

The problem of risk management in the pandemic is that of coping with new forms of risk, which are not easy to quantify or detect. The literature has attempted to consider this issue, by proposing methods to manage this risk.

The central tenet is that the past cannot be used as a guide [18]. The 'traditional' approach to risk management uses information from previous events, experienced directly and by others to compile data in order to identify, categorise and assess risk, using prescribed criteria, such as impact on the organisation.

The literature suggests techniques for planning, given this uncertain environment. 'Backcasting', for instance, is proposed. This suggests that the organisation envisions a desired future position then implements change to achieve it. The alternative approach is to envision what is undesirable and attempt to avoid it. Analysis of trends, crisis simulation and forecasting, namely more traditional techniques, are also recommended.

The importance of 'horizon scanning' was emphasised, where the organisation's representatives check the environment for signs of change that could ultimately affect operations.

The use of tools for business analytics was viewed as essential to allow the early recognition of potential risk [19]. The requirement to build capacity in respect of these tools and skills, in order to utilise them successfully, was highlighted as being of paramount importance. The use of business analytics in order to glean 'situational awareness' regarding the risk environment was emphasised and viewed as superior to other methods, such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, which are

based on a stable perspective, and the use of statistics, that tend to access results of historical data. The problem is that both premises could be invalid in the post pandemic environment.

The examples of novel risk are specified as: events occurring outside the normal environment of the organisation; multiple breakdowns that are difficult to accommodate; rapid acceleration of risk on an international scale [20]. The potential solution offered was to 'scan the horizon' in order to identify potential risks and empower an executive or team to provide a response for the organisation. The delegation of responsibility to local experts was also recommended, in order to formulate an appropriate response. The inclusion of all employees in the activity of risk identification was suggested, via a suitable system to gather, evaluate and respond to potential threats and opportunities. General tactics to reduce project risk are also offered, including the reduction of duration and complexity [21]. The consideration of environments, in terms of sustainability, is recognised as an important aspect of risk identification and management. The capture and review of learning from projects via appropriate systems is regarded as being of paramount importance, in this endeavour.

4 Findings

An interview with an industry practitioner, responsible for risk management at a company that runs international projects, was undertaken. The principal themes were discerned for analysis, cited and related to the literature. These themes also comprise potential areas of learning for practitioners.

4.1 Horizon scanning

The process of '**horizon scanning**' was mentioned. This was defined as a collaborative effort by members of the company to identify risks and opportunities in the environment. These were then registered in the systems, in order to permit appraisal. This should allow the risk data to be filtered for use. All employees were encouraged to participate, with a central team collating and evaluating the risk data.

This theme relates to Kaplan et al [20], for example, who stress the importance of actively viewing risk in the organisation's environment [22], in respect of such a perspective. .

4.2 Revenue stream interrupted

The restriction on movement to combat the pandemic was highlighted. This meant that company operatives could not perform activities relating to a commercial project. This led to the '**interruption of a revenue stream**' for the firm. The requirement was thus highlighted for a budget contingency to accommodate this risk.

This concern is stated by Marabelli et al [9], for instance, in considering the effect on remote workers regarding risk and financial penalties.

4.3 Learning from Previous Critical Incident

One key aspect that helped enhance the company's ability to cope with the pandemic was the **'issues arising from a previous critical incident'** (a terrorist bomb in the city centre several years before the pandemic). The use of transport and headquarters' office access were inhibited, interrupting business continuity. This led to the promotion of home working with the use of laptops. The eventual effect was to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the level of business.

This is mentioned by Kaplan et al [20] and Blair et al [21]. The importance of gathering knowledge from the environment, including organisational history, is emphasised.

4.4 Homeworking

The company had already introduced a **'provision for homeworking'** using laptops and access to a web communications platform for most employees. This was accelerated by the previous terrorist incident and the subsequent office access problems. These measures meant that the move to homeworking, due to the actions required to combat the pandemic, was facilitated.

This company initiated workstation health and safety assessments, to ensure that homeworking conditions were appropriate. A budget for homeworking was created, necessitated by these measures.

These issues are addressed in the literature, for example Marabelli et al [9] and Hacker et al [10]. These authors consider the usage of online activities in the pandemic and the use of virtual teams (in respect of organisational leadership [23]).

4.5 International audits done virtually

The respondent cited a change of role, as international travel to perform audits for overseas customers had been part of the remit. These were now delivered virtually, to accommodate the prevailing constraints. **'Webcams were used to examine the overseas sites remotely and thus deliver this service'**, so procedures were adapted to enable business continuity.

This theme of adapting service delivery to a virtual mode and the subsequent issues is present in the literature, for example Hacker et al [10] and Marabelli et al [9].

4.6 Guarantees of the systems for virtual working

The respondent stated that the move to homeworking meant that **'system security and integrity were paramount'**. These aspects had already been considered and investment had been made in systems to guarantee them, via the engagement of suitable partners [24]. The increase in homeworking due to the circumstances of the pandemic meant that that heavier reliance was placed on systems, in respect of delivering the business objectives.

This is reflected in the work of Hacker et al [10], who identify security as a principal concern of homeworkers, using web communications platforms and addressing the technology life cycle [25].

4.7 Key person dependency

The company was described as being 'small' and thus the problem of **'key person dependency'**, namely reliance on certain individuals, was identified. The occurrence of the pandemic exacerbated this potential risk, with staff having to self-isolate, cope with family illness and being more likely to become ill themselves, with consequences for performing their work. The possible deterioration of the service, due to these conditions, was therefore considered. Measures had already been implemented, prior to the pandemic, to distribute the knowledge of key staff. The use of deputies and contracts that retained some access to key staff, even after leaving full-time employment, provided a level of cover in respect of this risk. The system of homeworking also enabled potential access to key staff, in an emergency.

This is reflected in the work of Blair et al (21), considering the requirement for the appropriate personnel and skills to deliver business-critical projects.

4.8 New arrangements formalised with contracts

The respondent stated that the actions taken to accommodate the pandemic had a permanent aspect, in that the new 'flexible working policy' meant that the facility to work at home was offered to the majority of employees, as part of their contracts. These allowed the employees to continue to work from home and spend only a minor percentage of time in the office, according to the dictates of the business. The temporary arrangements to accommodate the constraints of the pandemic were thus continued as a potentially permanent state, embodied in these contracts, to suit both the employee and employer.

This is reflected in the literature, in Lewin [7] and Esposito et al [15] on the importance of agreements. The new contracts represent the 'refreezing stage', where change is embodied in the 'new order', as an ongoing arrangement.

5 Discussion

The research can be summarised by applying a modification to Lewin's original change model [7], characterising change as having three steps: unfreezing; change; refreezing. The suggested model of change, illustrated in Figure 1, reinterpreted in the post pandemic environment, examined in this research, comprises the following steps: imposed change; change accommodation or exploitation; establish new order.

Change was imposed, due to the constraints of the pandemic, potentially creating ongoing problems with the technological solutions. Lewin's original 'unfreezing' stage, by contrast, entailed the preparation for the change agenda via persuasion of individuals and groups, in a 'voluntary' phase.

The next stage, comprising the implementation of the change agenda, overcoming the barriers to learning in order to achieve this objective, is now viewed as a response to the constraints of the pandemic. This response can be divided into exploitation of potential opportunities and accommodation, where the organisation has to find alternative methods of delivery, namely possible solutions, or absorb losses, thus revising their strategic choices [26].

The final stage of 'refreezing', comprising the incorporation of the changes into normal business, is similar. The 'new order' is established so the changes in the post pandemic environment are adopted, amended or, in some instances, discarded. This will constitute the revised arrangements, following the pandemic, thus setting up mechanisms for coping in the future.



Figure 1. Adaptation of Lewin's Change Model for the Post Pandemic Environment

6 Conclusion

An exploratory, empirical study of a single case and literature review were employed. The analysis is summarised by an interpretation of Lewin's change model together with recommendations for practitioners to accommodate the circumstances of the pandemic and the ensuing risk environment. Further research could be performed on more cases in a variety of organisational contexts, in order to verify and extend these findings.

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Dr Garry Blair
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CHAPTER 3 - Risk Management Framework

Constructing a Risk Management Framework to Protect the Organisation.

Dr Garry Blair, Helen Woodcock, Dr Rosane Pagano and Lewis Endlar

ABSTRACT:

Risk management is a critical activity for every organisation. It is important to consider risk in all operations and balancing risk with reward is an essential component of strategy for most companies, in the context of their environment and the current volatile conditions. This paper discusses the formulation of a risk management framework in order to address this important area, in a comprehensive, structured, planned method. A process for the construction of such a framework is proposed, based on practice.

The requirement to scan the organisation's horizon, discerning the 'Risk Universe', possibly using external consultants, is noted. A map of risk coverage should be formulated to ensure adequate protection and remove excessive risk provision. Risk champions can be recruited to disseminate good practice, creating a culture of risk awareness. The organisation's appetite for risk must be ascertained and a positive contribution made, in respect of environmental issues.

A review of the literature was performed and the key themes extracted. A semi-structured interview with a director of an international company was enacted. The main themes were selected, via an inductive approach. The research results were analysed and then utilised to form a proposed procedure for constructing a risk management framework.

KEYWORDS: Risk Management Framework; Risk Universe; Risk Appetite; Risk Map; Horizon Scanning; Sustainability.

1 Introduction

Every organisation needs to consider risk management, especially in the prevailing volatile environment. The requirement for a planned response is paramount, in order to counter the potential threats.

Several key definitions can be provided,

Risk Management is "the activity of calculating and reducing risk, so that an organization does not fail or lose money". (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024)

Framework is,

"the ideas, information and principles that form the structure of an organization or plan". (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024)

The planned approach to risk management is the principal theme of this paper.

1.1 Problem Statement

Organisations experience a large number of threats in their environment, due to a range of factors that have increased the level of uncertainty and the potential for risk events. Allianz (2024) cites the likelihood of categories of risks occurring in 2024, utilising a global survey of businesses, as: 36% for cyber security incidents; 31% for business interruption; 26% for natural catastrophes; as well as 18% for climate change; and 14% for political risks, for example. This indicates a need for organisations to address potentially damaging incidents in volatile, uncertain operating conditions. The area of risk can, thus, be addressed using a structured plan.

1.2 Research Objective

The aim of this paper is to provide a recommended method for constructing a risk management framework in order to assist organisations in practice. This paper provides a contribution to management and change management, in that it focuses on the protection of organisations against risks from their environment.

2 Methodology

A review of several major journals was undertaken and articles on risk and risk management were identified and analysed. An inductive approach was employed to analyse this data into themes, without using a predefined coding structure. A semi-structured interview with a practitioner was conducted. This discussion was also scrutinised for key themes without using a predefined coding structure (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991 and Blair and Pagano, 2021a). The principal question for the research was to consider the construction of a risk management framework or plan that will address the potential risks in the environment (as per Blair, Pagano and Burns, 2019).

3 Literature Review

A review of key journals was conducted and current articles extracted, focused on risk management. The main themes were identified from an analysis of these articles, in respect of creating a risk management framework.

3.1 Political Risk

The global free trade economy has been replaced by 'the new national security economy', according to an article by Lee and Glosserman (2022). Political tension between nations has affected companies.

The 'silo approach' to risk in organisations, that is every function performing its own risk management, is problematic because it can cause a failure to have a comprehensive perspective of risk. There is a need to adopt a more holistic approach because of the global nature of risk, also to have broader disciplines for recruits to understand global risks. Supply chains, location of production facilities and

sensitive commercial information, especially technology, are key factors in managing risk. Horizon Scanning, thus covering the global environment and considering national politics, is a critical activity for a risk management strategy.

Astvansh et al (2022) enacted a study of geopolitical risk effects on innovation. This article used statistical data on US companies, gathered over a long period. This showed a reduction in innovation, based on the number and value of patents registered, if geopolitical risk increased. This affected companies more if they had a greater percentage of revenues from foreign countries. The threat of geopolitical action had greater impact than actual action, perhaps because it is harder to quantify these effects. The solution could be to reduce exposure in respect of revenue from foreign countries, especially where there is a threat of geopolitical action. The ultimate solution is for the private sector and politicians to collaborate in order to reduce the threat of global conflict, according to these authors.

3.2 Environmental Risk

A study of US business by Herrington (2023) states that there is a need to treat physical risk as per cyber security threats.

Extreme weather, violence, political tensions and public health disasters mean a more uncertain environment. The prevailing threats to supply chains, assets and staff must be considered. Businesses need to have contingency plans for disruption, which should consider the availability of finance, premises, equipment and staff. These must include communications and responsibilities, according to this author. Planned responses should be prepared, incorporating a clear delegation of authority, so leaders are nominated to deal with the crisis. A proactive approach should be employed that is 'agile', in that the business must ensure that the risk plan is regularly updated and contingencies are identified and checked.

Research into small business losses in one area of the United States after a climate disaster, comprising a severe hurricane, demonstrated the value of proactive risk management (Collier and Ragin, 2022). The suggestion was made that climate change will cause severe losses in future. Small businesses will have limited resources to cope with the aftermath and can provide a good indicator of the necessity of measures to manage risk in this area. This article states that around 90% of the businesses studied in the region suffered losses due to the climate event and approximately 40% experienced property damage, which generated much greater losses as this caused businesses to close for periods, in some cases.

The problem of a primarily short-term approach to finance was highlighted, leading to a lack of financial reserves to help these businesses recover from the disaster. Many relied on personal finance to maintain operations after the hurricane, such as loans from the business owner, family members and friends. Insurance policies were not always adequate, as many businesses could not afford the premiums. Loss of trade and flooding, for example, may have been excluded from such policies. Destruction of stock, premises, supply chain disruption, power failure, damage to reputation, loss of customers and staff comprise further costs on the businesses, caused by these events, which are often not considered in terms of recovery. Many

businesses were not in a position take advantage of post disaster loans to aid recovery, as their poor financial state prohibited further debt and repayments. The need for robust risk management measures was stated, including planning and financial contingency, in order to facilitate business survival and disaster recovery.

An article by Macomber (2022) considers that climate change has led to some areas being exposed to higher levels of risk in respect of natural destructive events. This research considers how businesses, as well as individuals, should address the increased risk environment.

Several steps are suggested, in order to protect the business, namely:

Prioritise the climate risk, compared with other events. Evaluate the business exposure to risk in respect of this factor;

Transfer the risk to another party, via financial means. This is usually in the form of insurance to compensate the business in the event of loss. The costs here may be prohibitive, though, especially in an area of historic risk;

Avoid the risk exposure, for example, by relocating the business or exposed portion. This may entail selling several shops or sites in the areas of maximum exposure and reinforcing the remaining premises to improve protection in order to withstand the climate effects;

Minimise the potential damage via better detection systems, movement of assets and reinforcing the remaining assets that are exposed to this climate threat. This may involve not dealing with certain customers who have high risk exposure, although there will be costs in adopting this approach. These measures can comprise a risk management plan that proactively addresses this form of risk.

3.3 Cyber Risk

An area of consideration is cyber risk (Zeijlemaker et al, 2023). This is identified as a significant and increasing threat to organisations, in this US-based study. The possibility of a cyber attack breaching security is given as 25% (in respect of Fortune 1000 companies that is the annual list of the leading US companies by revenues, as compiled by 'Fortune' magazine). The threat is to current and future operations, with costs of disruption, rectifying the situation, the effect on customers, including loss of business, reduction in the confidence of key stakeholders, such as investors, and loss of data, including confidential information, as well as the legal costs incurred.

This is also an area of increased regulation, with US law requiring companies to have policies to protect against cybercrime. The need for cyber security measures to be aligned with the objectives of the business is viewed as being critical to success in this area. The requirement to communicate the nature of such threats to executives, who may not be technically literate, is noted.

It is important to invest in preventative measures in this area and to ensure that they are updated. The significance of a proactive approach is mentioned, as reactive

measures are more costly, due to the breaches in security. Appropriate arrangements should be implemented, such as improving systems design and collaborating with other parties, perhaps to pool risk (that is, share risk contingency with another party, for instance). The need to engage in horizon scanning is viewed as paramount. This should allow organisations the opportunity of early detection of potential threats.

3.4 Risk Planning

A study of risk management in SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) by Chapelle (2023) noted that they do not have as many regulatory obligations as larger companies, however they are unlikely to have the resources to cope if there is a problem.

This paper states that a proportionate response is required. Excessive security software is costly and slows down processing, whereas too little protection can result in an organisation being closed by the occurrence of a major risk. Controls should be created to be appropriate to the risks generated by the tasks. The suggestion is to setup system of reporting, so all employees can communicate potential issues, which are then evaluated. A positive response to risk management is required. Success should be noted and understood, according to this research. Projects with ambitious objectives and delivery techniques will require matching risk management measures, in order to protect the organisation.

3.5 Risk Tactics

Piperca and Floricel (2023) conducted an empirical study of several international cases, considering resilience and responses to problems in projects. Four tactics were discerned to address issues in the projects under review. These were: increase effort and resources under the existing project arrangements; make an adjustment or correction to the existing arrangements; create a revised project plan with a new set of arrangements; terminate the project. These are all tactics to accommodate risk, requiring resilience and resources, such as contingency in respect of finance and personnel. Experience in the discipline of project management is also needed, in order to detect the risk and apply an appropriate solution, thus enabling the project to continue or be closed in order to save resources, as necessary. These tactics can be planned in advance or emergent, as the project progresses, and may be repeated several times during the project, as required. There is still a need for the appropriate resources to enact these tactics, irrespective of the approach. These tactics can be escalated, increasing the intervention in the project.

The use of interventions to reinforce and adjust the course of a project are mentioned by Bukoye et al. (2022). These authors utilise qualitative methods to research multinational companies' projects by interviewing project management personnel to consider 'nudges', that is, actions taken to correct or confirm the course of a project, thus ensuring progress towards the stated objectives. These actions can be used to reduce risk or to provide a response after a risk event has occurred. Their aim is to ensure the delivery of the project objectives within the required time, cost and quality parameters. The actions can be focused on the personnel in the project.

They can be planned interventions, such as senior leaders sending reminders of critical deadlines to project staff. They can also be emergent, depending on the circumstances, such as the amendment of prototype products, based on feedback from a customer representative, as per agile project management. These 'nudges' should, thus, reduce project risk via their confirmatory or corrective actions.

Toukola et al (2023) consider the creation of value by partners, at the commencement of major public sector projects. The partnerships studied are between public and private sector organisations, via research into several major urban projects in Finland. Several phases were identified in the preliminary stage of these projects. The first phase is called 'zoning', where the initial project idea and scope are defined. The next phase is termed 'exploring', where initial contact between the project parties occurs and the possible remit and options are discussed. The next phase is 'procuring', when the project partners agree to work together, usually via a formal contract and, possibly, a tender process. The final phase of this initial stage is 'negotiating', when the partners further discuss the project, to attain a common view of the key elements and their roles in the delivery process. The implementation of the project can then commence. These phases should reduce the risks of the project, by selecting an appropriate partner and defining an agreement on their respective roles. The development of trust and assurance of a contract, giving a formal legal agreement for this enterprise, should help to reduce the risk inherent in this work. This preliminary stage is viewed as being critical to ensuring that the scope of the project is defined and parties have reached an understanding, possibly with legal guarantees underpinning the delivery of this work.

Paeleman et al (2023) consider the actions taken by smaller companies, namely private SMEs, in a financial recession. The definition of an SME, provided by the European Commission in 2020, is a business that has 250 employees or fewer, an annual turnover of 50 million euros or less and assets of 43 million euros or less, according to this article. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) comprise around 90 per cent of the firms in most economies, as per this research. This article utilised a quantitative analysis of data from Belgium. The financial records of a large sample of these companies were analysed. The original premise that companies adopting a more conservative approach to resourcing in the recession would have superior results, including enhanced survival prospects, was checked. The results of this research showed that the opposite was true, in that companies that invested resources during the recession generally had superior results and survival rates. This was particularly true of newer companies, which tended to invest more aggressively to exploit the prevailing opportunities in their markets. Companies that accumulated financial reserves and also acted to reduce their wage bills, generally had inferior results. These tended to be older companies, which may have had more resources and thus, more discretion in this area. Newer companies probably had a more agile perspective in respect of gaining new business, exploiting opportunities and less commitments to constrain their actions. The risk management aspect was illustrated in that companies experiencing a financial recession should not conserve resources but rather maintain and possibly increase their use of resources to keep and extend their market share, sales and revenue. The use of more aggressive tactics by the company management as a response to a financial crisis should, according to this research, increase the prospects of company survival and enhance

financial stability, in contrast to the potentially inferior outcomes from more conservative tactics. This is an example of counterintuitive action, where the option with an apparently higher level of risk, namely not saving resources in a recession, actually improves the prospects of success and preservation of the company.

The article by Swärd et al. (2023) examines the relationships between parties to a project in a study of a major infrastructure development in Norway. This considers the aspects of trust and control, demonstrating that perceptions of these factors could vary between the partners, contingent on the events during the project. An empirical study analyses critical incidents, experienced during the course of the project. The views of trust and control are discussed, in respect of the parties. Imbalances were noted, as trust was eroded in the project partnerships. The measures enacted to rectify these situations were discussed. The link between control and trust was considered. A lack of trust between the project partners probably means higher levels of control, such as reference to contract terms, whereas a high degree of trust between the project partners probably means more relaxed controls, for example.

The potential implications for risk management are that having a good partnership with a high degree of trust is preferable but the situations in the project have to be managed, to maintain the status of mutual trust. The application of control may be required in order to obtain the desired result, if there are problems with the partnership, leading to a lack of trust.

The tactics to address asymmetry of trust and control between the partners can be viewed as a means of risk management. Confirming routine practices, reorganising these practices and joint problem solving were the tactics utilised in this case. These were used to adjust the relationship of trust with control via application of the required tactics to restore the balance to an acceptable equilibrium between the project partners.

4 Findings

An interview was conducted with a director of an international company, who has responsibility for risk and sustainability. The principal area of the questions was to discuss the formulation of a Risk Management Framework. The key themes from the interview were then related to the literature, in order to provide further analysis.

The respondent provided a definition, namely 'a risk management framework is a set of deliverables to provide structure to successfully manage and mitigate risks and look at opportunities for the business and ensure this area is managed in a cohesive way'. The critical activity of managing risk was identified, with the requirement to control this aspect in conjunction with exploiting opportunities for the business. The aim is to coordinate risk management with reward for business initiatives.

4.1 Political and Cyber Risk

'The Risk Universe can be defined by the PESTEL tool and comprises the environment as it applies to the company in terms of risk exposure. This can have

positives and negatives.' The strategic view of risk is suggested, using an holistic approach to studying the environment (via PESTEL, that is regarding the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal aspects). This emphasised a broad consideration of the risks that the organisation may experience. There may be challenges in terms of covering these risks and positive aspects in respect of the potential rewards for accepting these risks, in the form of business opportunities. The technological aspect needs to be given priority, considering the heightened nature of risks in the prevailing environment and increased organisational dependence on technology, for instance.

The strategic dimension is studied in Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2021). The importance of marketing strategy is considered in Blair, Betts, Conway, Hyde and Pagano (2024). Managing global projects is investigated in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2023b). The technology aspect is addressed in Blair and Pagano (2023); Blair, Morris and Pagano (2023) and the life cycle (Blair, Grant and Woodcock, 2020), focused on implementing solutions. Risk reduction in technology changes is examined in Blair, Pagano and Burns (2019).

4.2 Environmental Risk

The function of checking the environment for risks is referenced by the respondent, 'Horizon scanning is carried out. This is carried out by external agencies, utilising the supply chain and internally. Issues arising from law and regulation are addressed. Consultants are used, for example to carry out the internal audit function.' The use of specialists from outside the organisation is mentioned. These add vital resources to the risk management framework, in order to enhance the analysis and response to the prevailing risk environment. The risk environment is addressed in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2021). The activity of outsourcing is considered in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2022).

'Environmental issues are a priority. The organisation looks at opportunities to improve in respect of their green impact. The overall aim is to achieve a mature risk level.' Consideration of the environment is, thus, emphasised with a commitment to improve in this area. Procedures should be clearly defined and documented with appropriate resources allocated to address environmental risk, in order to signify a mature level of provision. The environment is considered, in terms of sustainability, in Blair and Pagano (2021b). The use of working in a virtual environment, including on virtual teams, thus potentially reducing environmental impact, is discussed in Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2022).

4.3 Risk Planning

A comprehensive view of the risk coverage by the organisation is require. This is referred to by the respondent, 'Risk Wall is a map of all of the connected parts of risks for the company. This should reveal the overlaps, namely the concentrations of where risks occur.' An assessment of further action can then be enacted, where additional measures are required or coverage can be reduced.

'The main risk areas are managed to ensure the risk exposure does not increase and reduce the impact on the objectives of the organisation.' This statement focuses on monitoring mechanisms, which are vital to check the current status of risks and ensure the measures are appropriate.

A key artifact is mentioned in the following statement, 'A Risk Manual is a good set of guidelines to define scope and record how to assess, manage and monitor risk.' This should be the main document for the risk management activity in the organisation. It should be updated regularly to reflect changes in practice and be available to personnel, in respect of the appropriate levels.

4.4 Risk Tactics

The monitoring process was further referenced by the respondent, 'It is vital to monitor and review risk regularly, monthly and annually. This will include reporting of risk and understanding the potential impact on the business. Ensure executives are happy with risks.' Processes need to be setup to perform these regular reviews, together with assessing and implementing the required responses. Responsibility for this work should be clearly allocated.

The perspective of key stakeholders, organisational policy and circumstances determine the capacity for risk. This is mentioned in the interview as, 'Risk appetite is different depending on the area. There is zero tolerance for risks in respect of health and safety, as well as cyber security, for example, and high for strategy development, where potential loss is accepted in order to make gains.' The context is therefore paramount in considering the view of risk. Some organisations can be more cautious and others more entrepreneurial, assuming higher risk levels to potentially gain higher rewards. The critical role of leadership is highlighted in Blair and Pagano (2020) and Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2023).

The requirement to cultivate an appropriate environment within the organisation for identifying and addressing risk is mentioned. The interviewee stated, 'The internal structure to manage risk relies on a risk culture, where personnel are confident to talk about risk, and risk champions to disseminate good practice to their teams.' Engaging the workforce to consider risk and address it via the use of 'champions' is viewed as a key activity. The importance of skills development is covered in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2023a), also the use of virtual training in Blair and Pagano (2021c).

5 Discussion

The research results were accessed to create a procedure for constructing a risk management framework. This comprises a plan to address potential internal and external risks in respect of organisations, based on the learning from the literature and practice (see Diagram 1 below), thus summarising the learning from the research.

The procedure for developing a risk management framework covers tasks that are focused on perspectives that are both internal and external to the organisation and

comprise a potential guideline for practice. The objective is to understand and accommodate external and internal risks by leveraging the resources of the organisation to construct and operate a system of control.

The key actions for the organisation have been identified, along with the supporting tasks and the resulting documents to be generated.

Number	Key Action	Supporting Tasks	Documents
1	Determine the Risk Environment	Process the data on political, economic, technological and environmental risk to obtain an understanding of the risk universe.	Map of the Risk Universe
2	Horizon Scanning	Scan the environment for information on risks. Employ organisations to perform this task.	Contract / Agreement
3	Establish Risk Culture	Educate employees on risk awareness. Setup inclusive procedures for risk monitoring. Recruit and train champions to manage risk activities on teams.	Procedures / Champion Job Role
4	Determine Risk Appetite	Check views of major stakeholders as well as organisation's requirements, such as from regulations. Use this information to determine risk appetite for key activities, for example investment in higher risk shares.	Document Stakeholder Agreement
5	Check Risk Coverage	Check the provisions for covering risk across all of the organisation. Appropriate tactics should be applied, such as detection, mitigation, avoidance and reduction. Contingencies should be determined. The risk coverage should be mapped, thus revealing areas of omission and duplication in provision. Adjustments can be made to the coverage, based on these results.	Risk Map / Tactics
6	Create Risk Manual and Procedures	Procedures for dealing with risks should be determined, for example the responsibilities, responses and personnel to act in a crisis event. These should all be documented and a Risk Manual compiled. The latter should be updated regularly and available to personnel at the required levels.	Risk Manual / Procedures

Diagram 1. A Procedure for Constructing a Risk Management Framework

6 Conclusion

This paper has contributed to research on organisations by considering the vital area of risk management in the current environment. A procedure for constructing a risk management framework to protect organisations has been suggested, based on recommendations from practice and academic sources. Further research could extend this study by expanding the remit to include a wide range of organisations and countries.

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Dr Garry Blair
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CHAPTER 4 - Outsourcing

'To Outsource or Not to Outsource': Resource Decision-making in the Project Management Environment

Dr Garry Blair, Helen Woodcock and Dr Rosane Pagano

Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT:

Every organisation engages in some form of outsourcing in order to sustain their operations. The decision to outsource certain functions and the selection of the optimum providers is an important aspect of organisational strategy. Failure in respect of outsourcing could have a critical effect on an organisation, leading to losses and ultimately its termination. Failure to utilise the most efficient and effective option can also lead to problems, as competitors may improve their relative position and remove business from the organisation.

The key factors in making decisions to outsource activities are discussed. The importance of the features of the organisation and its context are emphasised. The rationale behind outsourcing is mentioned, principally this concerns the supply of products or services that the organisation would prefer not to make or perform, for various reasons. The form of the contract between the provider and client is also studied, in order to discern the key features.

The option of global sourcing is considered. Organisations can move all or some of their activities overseas, termed 'offshoring'. Access to global resources can thus be enabled, so widening the remit beyond the proximate locality.

This paper considers outsourcing in respect of technology. The area of cloud computing is discussed, as both an illustration and a key mechanism for the provision of outsourced IT services. The decision to migrate activities to cloud computing is examined and the process outlined, with a generic model from the literature being cited.

The global market for outsourced services comprises billions of dollars, with the proportion of this revenue for IT being over 70% of the total. This activity thus remains as a very important, lucrative area, with the pandemic stimulating demand for online services, as personal contact and mobility were limited by government restrictions.

A thematic analysis of selected, key literatures is undertaken. A summary of factors related to outsourcing decision-making and contract formulation is provided, in order to assist practice and constitute a focus for further research. The principal facets of an outsourcing contract are identified, utilising an empirical study.

KEYWORDS: Outsourcing; Offshoring; Global Sourcing; Cloud Computing; Cloud Migration; Contract Clauses; Contract Termination.

1 Introduction

Outsourcing is a critical activity for organisations, comprising a vital element of their business strategy. Organisations will choose to outsource aspects of their operations for a number of different reasons. This will, hopefully, provide them with advantages in delivering their core objectives by reducing the time and other resources allocated to non-core activities, that can be performed more efficiently by other organisations. Technology management forms an important activity for outsourcing, as it is a prime area for such contracts [1].

A definition of outsourcing (provided by Wetherly and Otter, 2018:486 [2]) is "the buying in of components, subassemblies, finished products and services from outside suppliers rather than by supplying them internally." The rationale for this action may be lack of expertise, capital, space or access to cheaper products, components and services. This provides the justification for using external suppliers, rather than performing these activities within the organisation. The act of outsourcing can have a 'knowledge transfer' effect, from the original client to the provider. The latter, for example, is likely to require specialist knowledge of the former, in order to fulfil the contract. The transfer of the IT function, for instance, leads to the migration of knowledge workers, who possess the specialist skills to deliver the required services. The transfer of these personnel from the original company means that the latter will lack this technical knowledge, in respect of future decisions in this sphere. There is also a potential 'power shift' in that the original company relies heavily on the outsourcing provider in this area, thus permitting the negotiation of improved commercial terms, if allowed. This advantage is limited by the contract or the time it would take the original organisation to replace the outsource provider, either with another company or recruitment of in-house IT personnel.

Offshoring can be defined as "involves moving a process to another country.....where a firm not only locates an activity in another country but also contracts this activity to another firm, it is referred to as offshore outsourcing" (Needle, 2015: 590 [3]).

The objective is to gain advantage from moving those operations to another country. This could be in terms of taxation, labour or materials generating cost gains. It may be for strategic reasons, such as obtaining entry to an overseas market. It could also be motivated by the lack of expertise, staff, capital or space in the contracting organisation, together with access to specialist resources in the provider organisation.

A multinational company could move operations to an overseas branch without engaging in outsourcing activities, for example. The movement of operations overseas to another company is "offshoring outsourcing", where the activities are performed by another company, on behalf of the original organisation.

Outsourcing usually requires a contract between the two organisations, with a knowledge exchange (possibly also a transfer of personnel). The original organisation retains responsibility for the outsourced service, which includes liability for failures by the contractor, especially in respect of the customers and investors. It is therefore important that the contract contains the required level of security and ensures the necessary service levels are defined and agreed. There are also technology implications, irrespective of the activities that are included in the outsourcing agreement. It is important to guarantee the communications facilities between the two organisations. Technology is thus required in a coordinating role, with information being exchanged in an efficient manner. The fulfilment of service and goods requirements should therefore be readily enabled by the appropriate technology.

2 Methodology

A review of the principal literatures on this topic was undertaken and the key themes identified, using an inductive approach. An empirical study was also enacted, in the form of a semi-structured interview with an expert in this topic area. The main themes were then discerned from the interview text, using inductive methods in an 'open coding' technique, without predetermined themes [4]. These findings were then related to themes from the literature to inform this analysis by providing an academic context. A framework was compiled in order to summarise the research findings, from an academic and practice perspective (as per [5]).

3 Literature Review

Important literature sources were identified, regarding this topic, and reviewed in order to discern the key factors for this research. These were then organised and presented. The objective was to enhance understanding of outsourcing in the project management environment.

3.1 Global Sourcing

The aim of global sourcing is to maximise the benefits to the organisation, removing the constraints of location. The organisation can, in principle, thus access the optimum resources for the task. There is no requirement to select only local resources, although transport and communications should be considered as potential overheads, in making the final resourcing decision.

The motivation for global sourcing is improved resource status, thus enhancing the business position.

The global market for outsourced services is a significant value, with IT service forming a high proportion of this total. The predictions for this market continue to show strong growth.

The global market size of outsourced services was around \$92.5 billion in 2019 with IT outsourcing comprising \$66.5 billion of this total. The global IT outsourcing market is expected to grow by \$98 billion from 2020 to 2024 [6].

The indications are therefore that the global market for outsourced services will continue to be important in the future.

Global sourcing can be initiated via the creation of a strategy for outsourcing, which embodies good communications between the principal stakeholders. The operations that are to be outsourced should be identified and collaboration to create a specification should occur. This will define the outsourcing parameters and, ideally, ascertain the requisite service levels. The specification should, ideally, establish part of the outsourcing contract.

The project to outsource the specified activities should be monitored via controls (such as budgeted expenditure), as should the ongoing operations. There is also the requirement to overcome cultural and language differences, if the activities are to be delivered by an overseas branch or company.

Penetration of overseas markets can occur through a variety of different mechanisms, for example: Exporting, where products are sold in another country's market; Licencing, where the product is produced under licence from the original organisation; Franchising, where the business model is licenced (for example the McDonald's company, selling food); a Joint Venture, where partner companies form a new firm; Creation of a wholly-owned subsidiary; Offshore outsourcing, where part of the business is delivered by another company in another country (Needle, 2015: 41 [3]). These activities can all lead to outsourcing and offshoring, either via direct or indirect means.

3.2 Assessment of Outsourcing and Offshoring

The requirement is for the organisation to consider the various factors internally and external to the business, in order to decide on whether to outsource, offshore or maintain the current position, in respect of the selected operations. The overall position, accounting for these factors, will facilitate the decision-making process. The need is for information to be accumulated from different areas, to assist the decision-makers. The current business performance together with the key environmental factors, in respect of the organisation, need to be studied. A model of the assessment method has been identified [7].

The first step is suggested as the performance of an assessment of the present situation, embracing the factors within and exterior to the organisation. The requirement is to identify the threats and opportunities in the prevailing environment, also considering the internal processes of the enterprise. The objective is to determine the core business, sustained by the core activities. This will permit the non-core activities to be identified. These are the potential candidates for outsourcing. The organisation's value chain should be checked to verify the status of these specified activities. It may be deemed necessary to retain these in-house for strategic reasons (for example, retaining systems or data to prevent exposure to external view). The activities designated as 'non-core' can potentially be outsourced. This could lead to gains in terms of finance and strategy, due to the specialism of the external provider.

The next step is the undertaking of an efficiency assessment, considering the current state of the market. A cost comparison should be enacted, comparing those of the organisation to sector benchmarks and standards. This assessment should therefore consider the organisation's operating environment, including competitors and any similar organisations. The potential for economies of scale via outsourcing and current cost inefficiencies in the organisation, caused by attempting to deliver non-core activities in-house, should be identified. There needs to be an assessment of whether to deliver the activity in-house or purchase via an external supplier in an outsourcing arrangement. Once this decision has been made then the options for the delivery of this outsourced activity can be reviewed. The alternative providers and the delivery options for the latter can thus be considered. The type of partnership arrangements with the outsourcing company can also be examined.

The feasibility of the various options should then be studied. The potential risks and rewards of the viable options can be assessed [8]. The drivers to outsource the activities can be appraised, as well as the drivers for not outsourcing them. A rational review of the options can then be undertaken to contribute to a decision on outsourcing. This may be not to proceed with this option and thus retain the activities within the organisation.

If the decision to outsource is taken then the selection of options can be enacted. A suitable business partner can be identified, together with the preferred mechanism for engaging in outsourcing. The option to offshore the activities can be evaluated, with the most suitable country being identified via an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages. The preferred method can be selected and both the terms of the contract together with the required service standards can be negotiated.

The rationale for the outsourcing and offshoring choice needs to be understood. Key elements such as competition and price should be considered. The preferred option can be selected, based on requirements and the available choices. Suitable partners, suppliers and countries will need to be reviewed and final selection made, possibly after a tender process. The costs, profits, risks and prevailing opportunities need to be quantified, via the value chain. The performance of a feasibility study may be required, in order to determine the appropriate options. The business case for selecting the preferred option should be made, from the feasible alternatives.

3.3 Cloud Computing

The use of cloud computing, comprising the commercial provision of cloud services is an important example of outsourcing, assisting in the generation of revenue in this, the IT segment of the world economy.

The cloud provider companies give access to IT facilities via the internet. The client's staff could, for example, have access to their applications via a web browser link. A range of different services can be provided via the cloud, for example, giving access to the server, so the operating software and applications can be run by the client's staff and giving access to the server and operating system software so the client loads and runs the application. These IT facilities are thus delivered as a service by the cloud provider.

Data centres are used to support this service and the flexible use of parallel processing should facilitate the clients' workload variations. The hardware and software in the data centres enable these cloud outsourcing services. This provides economies of scale, thus maximising the use of facilities. Parallel processing enables large data sets to be processed and permits intensive processing required by client applications. This should generate cost savings in the work cycles, as a temporary increase in processing requirements, for example due to year-end procedures, can be accommodated. The additional capacity can be purchased and will be available, 'on demand' for the client. This scalability of processing power saves the client the expense of purchasing and maintaining a server to process this peak load then running the system at lower capacities for the rest of the year. The principle of 'payment for usage' therefore makes cloud computing attractive to many organisations, together with the freedom from hardware considerations. The latter means that clients do not have the overhead of purchasing and maintaining servers, including the employment of dedicated staff for this purpose.

There are potential issues with this form of outsourcing, though, in respect of security and privacy, as well as service availability and provision issues. The former originate from the outsourcing company running the clients' systems and therefore being privy to confidential information. The latter is about ensuring that the range of facilities and processing power are available, as dictated by the clients' needs. The contract is therefore paramount in guaranteeing these requirements. The global nature of this business can engender problems, in respect of the validity of contracts across international boundaries. The contract should also contain a service level agreement, incorporating the requisite range of facilities, standards and processing capacity [9]. The form of the contract is further investigated in the empirical work (detailed in the section on 'Findings').

Environmental considerations should also be a factor in the outsourcing decision. Regulation, stakeholder choice and the role of technology may influence this appraisal. The effect on the environment should be a key criterion, in respect of the final outcome [10].

3.4 Cloud Migration

The principal factors motivating a client to change to a cloud provider are outlined by Venters and Whitley [11] in their article. The technology aspects are considered, namely: the equivalence to the traditional systems, in respect of functionality; sufficient variety to cover the range of usage; the removal of complexity (enabled by the cloud provider); the service is scalable to meet demand. The service benefits are also reviewed, as: the users are more efficient in cost terms; aids innovation due to removal of non-core activities; simplifies usage (as complexity of the technology is delegated to the outsourcing provider).

The contributory factors concerning the decision-making for migration to cloud systems are also covered by Bhattacharjee and Park [12]. Their research mentions the positive aspects of relative usefulness and expected availability. The negative aspects are also covered, regarding dissatisfaction with the current, pre-cloud IT

provision. The constraints are mentioned, such as security concerns and the switching costs of conversion to cloud systems, including setup and costs of learning the new arrangements, in respect of both parties. Motivation was highlighted, identifying the experience of the decision-maker and influential individuals in the former's sphere. The outcome of these factors will create an intention to migrate to cloud systems and, ultimately, a decision to outsource (or not to outsource).

A survey of IT managers was undertaken [13], to discern the principal concerns of this group in moving systems to the cloud. The drivers were mainly focussed on efficiency, with cloud services perceived as shortening delivery timelines, reducing costs and also optimising the scope of the projects. The dilemmas from such moves were centred on potential problems with data privacy, security, IT governance and local regulation (being problematic for global outsourcing). The requirement was viewed as the necessity for change and risk management plans to fully address these concerns, in managing the transition of systems to the cloud.

A generic model for the cloud migration process was created, based on case studies from different countries [14]. This provides a sequence of key activities for planning and implementing cloud systems. The main steps comprise: recover the required knowledge from the legacy system; choose the cloud platform, service option and provider; design the cloud system solution (or map to a standard solution); identify potential incompatibilities, thus establishing the differences between the local and cloud systems that need to be addressed; plan the migration with contingencies; test the cloud solution and then deploy in a live environment. This provides a scheme for delivering the cloud migration project.

3.5 Sociomaterial Framework

The boundaries defining outsourcing decisions were examined via case studies of government organisations [15]. The approach utilised here was to construct a 'sociomaterial' framework, thus examining the topic focussing on the social and material aspects. The premise was that the information systems defined current, valid knowledge in this area. This then created 'imbalances of knowledge', where repositories of systems' expertise exist in organisations. This leads to prescribed inclusion and exclusion, as the current systems arrangements determine the holders of valid knowledge. This shapes the boundaries between organisations, in practice. The determinants of valid knowledge can be executives who make outsourcing decisions, for example, and IT personnel, who write the IT systems. The latter may lead to reliance on this group, either by accident or design. This will then delineate inter-organisational boundaries, empowering outsourcing providers and groups of IT personnel, for example.

3.6 Contract Choice

The range of contract choice is considered [16], via research that analyses the contract database of a software development company. This provides an insight into outsourcing models. The broad categories of outsourcing types are: occasional contracts, purchasing standard IT products; recurrent contracts, in respect of standard IT products, such as periodic licence fees for operating and maintaining

leased, standard IT products; short-term contracts for developing bespoke IT products, such as a company website or system; long-term contracts for providing a bespoke service to an organisation, such as outsourcing the IT department or maintaining customised IT systems. This gives a useful perspective on classifying such transactions and the potential choices for an organisation.

3.7 IT Outsourcing Vendors develop Capabilities

A case study of IT outsourcing vendors [17] examines how these organisations develop capabilities, that is extend their provision of service to their clients. This enhancement can be created by design or in an unplanned, reactive manner. Both approaches can be configured with existing business units maintaining current service facilities and new business units created to develop the additional functions or, alternatively, existing business units having both a maintenance and a development role. This research outlined various approaches for encouraging outsourcing providers to develop new capabilities, in order to improve customer service and extend the range of service offered.

3.8 IT Outsourcing and Organisational Agility

The strategic nature of outsourcing is emphasised by a qualitative study [18]. The core principles underpinning successful outsourcing are: discrete, repeatable processes; and ability (leveraged via the IT department structure, skills, rules and communications). Outsourcing permits reconfiguration of IT solutions, to remove the resource requirement from the organisation and thus enable a focus on core activities. This, it is proposed, leads to 'organisational agility', so a rapid business response can occur, as the organisation can prioritise the implementation of the requisite change and the corresponding IT requirements can be delivered by the outsourcing provider. The necessity for continuous internal and external sensing is mentioned, as supported by the hybrid structure of the outsourced IT department and internal staff. The need for 'dynamic capability' is mentioned, defined as the improvement of current resources, the addition of new resources and their combinations.

3.9 Contract Equilibrium

The relationships between the parties to resourcing contracts are addressed by several authors. The objective is to obtain an equilibrium position, so that the contracts can be delivered as specified.

A new approach to contract negotiations is proposed [19], in terms of the division of co-created value. The authors suggest that the parties to the agreement should equally divide the additional value created. This occurs when the co-created incremental value would not occur if one of the parties withdraws, hence does not participate in the agreement. This is irrespective of the initial investment, value or power of the parties. The premise is that the value created is an equal result of the agreement of all of the participating organisations. The final terms, utilising this

perspective, should comprise the original return to each of the organisations, without the agreement, plus an equal share of the additional value created by the agreement. The notion is to encourage contracts that permit the co-creation of value and facilitate agreement between the contracting parties, based on an equitable distribution of gains. The perspective, experience, relative power of and consideration of reputation by the parties to the contract will affect the ultimate form of this agreement.

An empirical study of construction contracts [20] examined uncertainty in these arrangements, hence considered how risk may be reduced in terms of pressure on the contract terms. The point was to study 'opportunistic behaviour', which allow one party to make gains from other parties to the contract. This behaviour was more probable in an uncertain environment, namely one containing both behavioural and environmental uncertainty. The former is stated to be more likely when the latter condition exists. The scope for opportunistic behaviour is curtailed by the contract having defined terms, such as penalty clauses, and a means to accurately measure the performance of the contractor. The existence of such terms and clear definition of the contract arrangements, as communicated to and understood by all of the parties, should also assist in removing uncertainty and the potential for manipulation of the contract in favour of one party and to the disadvantage of the others. Different categories of projects were identified as exhibiting variations on this theme. Public sector infrastructure projects, for example, are more subject to governance, in respect of bureaucratic control and publicly accountable social and environmental outputs. IT projects are often characterised by information uncertainty, in respect of defining the intended outcome and the method to achieve these results. This also allows scope for opportunistic behaviour, thus increasing the requirement for appropriate control mechanisms.

The issue of equitable contracts is considered in a quantitative study [21]. This analyses the scenario of the client transferring their IT facilities to the contractor, as part of the outsourcing arrangements. The aim is to suggest how the contract can be formulated so that it is fair to all parties. The use of contract penalties and incentives is proposed for contracts where the service provision standard of quality can be measured. The latter require defined terms, such as an agreed specification of work, in order to permit contract appraisal. The option of retaining IT services in-house is suggested where there may be issues over quality and value for the cost. The transfer of IT assets can also be used to ensure both parties have an equitable arrangement, utilising finance and timing of the transfer. Situations where organisations are seeking access to enhanced knowledge to aid their development are mentioned. The importance of cost is, therefore, secondary to the acquisition of knowledge. The use of deferred payment terms was suggested, in cases where quality could not be measured. The experience of the first period can be used to assess the contractor performance. Failure to deliver the expected standard leads to the cancellation of the contract.

It is noted that after the transfer of IT assets and initiation of the outsourced services it may mean that the client needs significant investment to end the contract and either take the services back in house or find another provider. This could affect the decision to end the arrangements.

The element of knowledge transfer is also indicated. The outsourcing contract represents a transfer of knowledge from the client to the provider. This may be primarily motivated by a desire to access the provider's technical knowledge to enhance the client's business, rather than purely a cost rationale, as suggested. The knowledge transfer factor is thus a consideration for the contract decision.

The composition and operation of the 'project-based firm' is considered [22]. These are studied in respect of performing megaprojects, usually large-scale projects involving considerable resources which are leveraged to achieve a significant outcome, for example infrastructure developments. The project-based firms perform their business via projects, in this case by running the megaprojects for private and public sector clients who do not have the capacity to deliver the outcomes. This entails the coordination of in house and external elements in a temporary association, in order to deliver the requisite results. An example of this was provided, comprising the operation of a megaproject for a public sector organisation to deliver a major infrastructure change. The project-based firm thus requires the operation of formal and informal agreements, in order to achieve the prescribed outcomes. The objective is to work with the client in a flexible manner in order to deliver the project. Knowledge can be acquired from performing the megaprojects in series and parallel. This will build the capability to deliver such projects in the future. The uncertain nature of megaprojects, due to size, complexity and multiple stakeholder requirements, means that flexible contracts are required between the network of suppliers, in order to accommodate changes and problem-solving, due to the nature of the work. These linkages between organisations, including suppliers, are critical. A high degree of trust is therefore required between the project partners [23]. A flexible network of trusted suppliers is thus developed to deliver the megaproject, utilising contractual arrangements that provide for variations to accommodate project problems and changes. These networks need to build the capacity to manage such projects as well as the resilience to attain successful completion. The network can be reconfigured to deliver different megaprojects or multiples of such projects. Different partners can therefore be utilised in a varied set of arrangements, as dictated by the project requirements. The core set of partners can be maintained in order to coordinate these projects and help to accumulate and retain knowledge from the accompanying activities.

4 Findings

An experienced legal practitioner, who has worked in both the private and public sectors, was interviewed, in order to seek his opinion on the components of an effective contract. A semi-structured interview was held, discussing this topic. A thematic analysis of the interview text was then constructed, using an inductive approach. The key themes were considered with the literature, to assist in analysing this area.

4.1 Specification

The respondent stated that, '**you need to define what it is you are looking for**'. A clear specification of the contract requirements needs to be compiled. This should

state all of the goods and services to be provided by the outsourcing company. The requisite training and documentation should be included. Errors and omissions here can be very costly and can result in contract failure. The project's key stakeholders should all be represented in the process of constructing this document. It is vital that the main internal stakeholders and stakeholder groups comprehend and agree to these requirements. The outsourcing provider should agree to deliver the specification and this may be a formal statement in the contract, to that effect. Stakeholder communication and agreement are of paramount importance during this phase of the outsourcing project.

This theme is mentioned in the literature, in respect of the technology life cycle, for example [24].

4.2 Company Checks

The parties to the contract should perform the required checks, in respect of the other companies. **'The financial checks should minimise the risk of problems later on'**. These should comprise the verification of financial affairs, including the credit history and annual report and accounts. The quality of personnel in the firm is a key criterion. Statements of experience, career history and qualifications should be checked for the staff who will work on the contract. A reference should be sought from another client of the contractor company, in order to ascertain the standard of work and degree of satisfaction engendered. This should, ideally, be an independent view, with the reference site contacted directly. An opinion can thus be sought on the quality of the outsourcing work and services, as supplied to a comparable organisation. The reaction to problems, in terms of providing solutions, can be ascertained. **'Methods of working and trust are more important than the price'**, according to the respondent.

The issue of trust is cited in academic sources [25] as well as that of reduction of risk [8], for instance.

4.3 Delivery Schedule

A clear delivery schedule is needed to facilitate the contract fulfilment. **'It is important to specify the products and services to be delivered.'** The resources required by all parties should be understood. The timing of specific deliveries needs to be detailed, along with an acceptance procedure. The latter will be linked to the provision of payment for the contracted items.

4.4 Penalty Clauses

The inclusion of penalty clauses, where compensation arises from failure to perform a contractual requirement, should be carefully considered. These clauses need to be mutually agreed and comprise a reasonable compensation, considering the context of the contract. **'Both sides should be comfortable - the agreement has to be fair'**. Such penalties are typically used for late delivery of the requisite items or in the case of incomplete deliveries and flawed products or services.

The main point is that all parties should accept such clauses and the proposed compensation is reasonable. The conditions to trigger such payments should be clearly defined. The inclusion of such clauses can also reflect a power differential between the parties. This can be evident in the potential number of customers and suppliers, in respect of the outsourcing work. If there exists considerable competition for outsourcing work, for example, then it should be easier for a customer to apply penalty clauses in the contract.

These clauses should accommodate a degree of 'slack', namely an additional time allowance for project tasks, in case of delays. The extent that innovation is required in the contract introduce the potential for delays into the contract delivery and this should be reflected in the proposed timescales and any associated penalties.

These points are reflected in the literature as important factors ([19], [20], [5]).

4.5 Modular Delivery and Payments

Large contracts should, ideally, have a phased delivery, in order to reduce the risk and simplify the project. This can also be termed as modular delivery, for example where separate parts or modules of a system are delivered over time. These modules will have separate implementations, in an agreed sequence. This reduces the risk in terms of scale, commitment of resources (including finance) and strategic exposure, encompassing the key parts of the system that are affected. This will comprise a phased delivery of system conversions, in an outsourcing contract for a large system, for instance.

Payments should be, similarly, scheduled. The delivery and acceptance of each phase of the contract should trigger an agreed remuneration. This should allow cashflow considerations to be accommodated as the 'payment profile' is more evenly distributed over time. The provider is, therefore, remunerated for goods and services that are delivered and the customer pays for work completed and items received. **'The stages of delivery should be linked to payment and penalties'**, as per the respondent.

The modular delivery is considered in several key texts (such as [5]).

4.6 Compatibility

The issue of compatibility with current systems must be considered, as part of the outsourcing transfer. **'The provider should have systems and procedures that are compatible with those of the customer organisation.'** This will ensure that operations proceed seamlessly, once the outsourcing transfer has occurred. This may entail a review and recommendations, for example in respect of training staff and amending procedures. Formal standards can be used in order to ensure compatibility, for example those of the International Standards Organisation, professional bodies and technical specifications. Requirements in terms of compatibility can be agreed in the contract, as a guarantee to the parties involved. This should provide the requisite insurance against the provision of incompatible goods or services in the outsourcing project.

It is also important to ensure that the contract is compatible with the prevailing legislation and organisational regulations. This should include government and in-house procedures. Compliance could include data protection, environmental and social considerations, which may be the subject of internal and external reporting. The specification and resulting contract should reflect these compulsory and discretionary requirements.

This aspect should be considered as part of the renewal phase of the product lifecycle, as per the literature [24].

4.7 Schedule of Items

The contract should have a schedule of items and services to be delivered. This should, ideally, be engineered to permit additions to and exclusions from the outsourcing contract. This can invest the contractual arrangements with a degree of flexibility, permitting mutually acceptable amendments to resources to be made. The schedule must clearly specify the requisite contract items and services and be agreed by all of the parties. The main contract terms will apply to all of these goods and services, including the agreed amendments. This will facilitate an increase in the scope of the contract, in respect of supplied items and services, for example. This will remove the need for additional contracts or lengthy alterations to the existing contract, when amendments to scope are required, providing the terms remain the same.

The scope in outsourcing projects will need to be reviewed, as the implementation proceeds and during operations. The original contract may, therefore, be subject to revisions in respect of the outsourced areas and the accompanying components and services.

The importance of managing the scope of a project is highlighted as a critical issue in the literature [24].

4.8 Closure of Contract

An outsourcing contract can end for several reasons, within its legal framework. The standard reason is normal closure, in that the obligations under the contract have all been met by the relevant parties, namely the contract has been fulfilled.

The contract can be terminated if any of the parties breach their agreement under its parameters. This could, for example, comprise a failure to deliver the specified goods, services or payment.

4.9 End of organisation

The contract will end when one of the parties is no longer in the form that is on the document. This is usually due to the organisation being dissolved or declared insolvent, so ceasing to operate as a business entity. This means that one of signatories no longer exists, in law, so cannot form such an agreement. The

outsourcing contract is, therefore, invalid and its terms are not applicable to the parties. This status could be adjusted if the other parties are amenable. The contract terms could be transferred to another company, for example, via a new or amended contract, suitably revised.

The cessation of a contract and replacement of the service, for example due to a culture change or lifecycle movement, is noted by several literature sources (for instance, termination due to culture change [25] and replacement of technology [24]).

4.10 Arbitration

The contract can have **‘an arbitration clause to provide for conflict resolution’**. This should facilitate agreement in the case of a difference of opinion by the parties to the contract, without the need for litigation. This clause will state the procedure to be enacted in the case of a dispute that cannot be resolved by the contract parties. This usually involves referral of this dispute to an independent party, for example the head of a professional body. The latter will rule on the dispute, forming a solution for the parties to accept. This can save costly recourse to legal personnel. The acceptance of this procedure will depend on the status of the parties to the contract, in terms of their relative power.

The resolution of conflict in contracts is noted by several academic authors (such as [24]).

4.11 Teamworking

The formulation and successful operation of the outsourcing contract will entail teamwork, probably across several organisations. Coordination and communication, utilising several skills, will be required. Teamwork will probably be virtual, to some extent, in the post pandemic environment. The negotiation of the contract and its operation will, therefore, need to accommodate the use of virtual teams. The requirement is to recruit and lead a virtual team to execute the outsourcing project. The same team or a different one may be employed to maintain and operate the outsourced systems. Virtual working is more common and, hence, the use of virtual teams is more prevalent, due to the pandemic and the restrictions on movement to inhibit the spread of infection.

The outsourcing contract will require a blend of skills, in order to deliver the project. Legal, Finance, IT, Human Resources personnel, for example, may all be needed to finalise the agreement. An essential component of this team is trust, as the virtual team members rely on each to deliver the project. The team members will need to have the skills and motivation to contribute to the project, without the direct access and supervision of co-located teams. This may necessitate training for prospective team members to assist their skills development in respect of virtual working.

The importance of such training is emphasised in several sources (such as [26]).

'The preparatory stages are more important than the implementation', according to the respondent, as they set the parameters for the project.

The use of virtual teams in such projects and requirement for project leaders to be able to manage such teams is reflected in the literature (such as [25], [27]).

5 Discussion

A framework of the principal decision factors, including contract format, is suggested. This should provide a summary for the topic and assist practitioners in their decision-making and contract formulation process, regarding outsourcing activities. The main factors are illustrated (in Diagram 1 below). These can be categorised as internal or external to the organisation. The key internal factors comprise: the level of maturity of the organisation, in respect of project management and production capabilities; the degree of specialism in the product or service value chain; the company's experience in contracting; financial and risk considerations. These determine the ease with which the organisation can identify activities to outsource and implement such projects, given the prevailing constraints. The key external factors comprise: the perception of suppliers and the available options, in respect of products, services and outsourcing; assessment of the competition and current and potential partnerships; the organisation's operating environment, including the requirement for agility and meeting customer demands. These provide the context for the outsourcing decision, facilitating or impeding this activity depending on the circumstances. Partnership with an outsourcing provider is likely to require a long-term, strategic collaboration [23] so the element of trust is prevalent here, in respect of the decision-making. The contract format factors are outlined as: defining the requirements (including payment and closure terms); verifying the partners; and facilitating the requisite teamwork.

OUTSOURCING – DECISION FACTORS

INTERNAL

- Level of maturity of organisation – in terms of project management and production capability
- Degree of specialism – in the value chain
- Experience in contracting
- Financial and Risk considerations

EXTERNAL

- Perception of Suppliers / Available Options (in terms of product, service and outsourcing)
- Consideration of competition / Partnerships
- Operating Environment – requirement for agility / customer demands

CONTRACT FORMAT

- Clear definition of requirements
- Verify the contract partners
- Agree payment terms and penalties / bonuses
- Agree contract termination / closure
- Facilitate contract teamworking

Diagram 1 – Outsourcing Decision Factors and Contract Format

6 Conclusion

A thematic analysis of key literatures on outsourcing was undertaken and a framework, illustrating the main elements in the outsourcing decision, was constructed, in order to summarise this area. The principal elements of an outsourcing contract were identified and added to the framework. The importance of the outsourcing decision, as being critical to the successful delivery of organisational objectives, was emphasised. This research could be further developed with future empirical studies in a range of sectors, analysing the outsourcing decision.

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Dr. Garry Blair
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CHAPTER 5 - Skills Development

Skills Development in a Volatile Environment: A Systems View of the Learning Process.

Dr Garry Blair, Helen Woodcock and Dr Rosane Pagano

ABSTRACT:

Skills acquisition and development is a vital activity for society. If the latter is subject to volatile operating conditions then this activity becomes, consequentially, more difficult. The requirement to ensure the provision of an adequate supply of skilled personnel at an affordable rate is imperative. This is necessary to guarantee the delivery of services and products for society, ensuring both the level of supply and quality standards allied with development to enhance the future position. Failure in this sphere will lead to stagnation in key sectors, resulting in the decline of the society. This may impact on the technology in use and lead to comparative decline, for instance economically. The requirement to import the vital skills or purchase goods elsewhere, embodying such skills, may incur financial penalties that lead to economic decline.

This paper investigates the skills development required for practice, focussing on the crucial areas of business and project management. A literature review was enacted to ascertain the main themes of the topic. This provided a framework of understanding to utilise in an empirical study. Several interviews were held with a current practitioner, who works for a company that runs international projects. These focussed on the requirements for personnel, in terms of industry demand for skills. A perspective of the current requirements, in respect of education for employability, was therefore obtained. The results are summarised using soft systems techniques, in order to highlight the potential learning in this sphere.

KEYWORDS: Skills Acquisition; Skills Development; VUCA; Leadership Skills; Team Working; Soft Systems Methodology; Learning Process.

1 Introduction

The critical factors are the identification and development of skills in the labour force to accommodate volatile operating conditions. The facets of a VUCA environment (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) need to be considered, to develop an adequate response (Bennett and Lemoine, 2014). The counter to volatility is to seek stability, so areas that will endure in terms of economic performance and, hence, the demand for appropriate skills, need to be targeted by appropriate development policies. The response to uncertainty is to try to establish a sure position, so acquiring skills that are always sought or a range of skills, giving an element of contingency in the case of uncertain conditions, is a suitable response. Information needs to be gathered to make these decisions. Complexity needs to be addressed and simplification is perhaps the most useful action, with an interpretation of complex trends being resolved to the identification of 'skills gaps' in key areas. The response

to ambiguity is to clarify, so 'information gathering' mechanisms are needed, to inform policy makers and participants, thus enhancing decision-making in this sphere of training and education. An informed appraisal of the operating environment is thus required. This will involve the construction and use of information systems, to acquire and filter information to inform key policy decisions. The required skills in this volatile environment, complicated by the global health crisis, need to be discerned. A means to actually develop such skills should be identified, in order to ensure the selection of appropriate candidates for training and development of suitable mechanisms to impart the necessary skills. Guarantees of standards need to be established, so that the supply of qualified staff is assured, in terms of entry and exit standards. This will allow employers to recruit suitable staff and provide entrepreneurs with the requisite skills to foster development in all sectors. Suitable methods to teach the future and current workforce the new skills should thus be established. The 'reward' is economic and social development, with more value generated internally, in respect of products and services. This may also lead to an improved international position, with a possible contribution to the global market in outsourced services (estimated at around \$92.5 billion in 2019 (Mazareanu, 2020). Development of skilled personnel in key areas is also paramount – with IT, Healthcare, Logistics, Engineering and Construction, for example, continuing to be vital sectors, despite the legacy of the global pandemic and consequent economic effects.

2 Methodology

A review of the literature was undertaken, encompassing important journals. The main themes were identified and organised into categories for this topic.

The empirical work comprised an analysis of several semi-structured interviews with a manager, who works as a director for a company that runs international projects. The aim was to obtain information regarding the demand for skills in the employment market. The key themes were extracted from the interview record, using a grounded, inductive approach. This entailed the formulation of the coding categories as this information was processed (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991).

The themes identified from the interview were then compared with the findings from the literature, in order to enhance understanding in this area. A framework was formulated, as a summary of the main aspects of this area (as per Blair et al., 2019). This could provide an aid to understanding and assist with further research in this sphere. Soft Systems Methodology techniques were utilised in order to organise the results of the research (Checkland and Scholes, 1990). A 'systems' framework was constructed as a summary of the knowledge acquired from the study. The principal inputs, processing and outputs in the environment were, hence, identified. This 'process-based' approach matches the techniques employed in business and project management, in order to comprehend the work areas.

3 Literature Review

Several of the main journals were reviewed for contributions on this subject. The area of investigation was skills development, primarily focussed on business and project management. A thematic analysis was employed in order to obtain the

principal points within this sample of the literature. The objective was to provide a context to assist in the empirical study, namely interviews with a practitioner on course design for employability. A summary of the sample of literature is presented.

3.1 Current Trends

The prevailing trends in project and business management are considered, in order to discern the future demand for skills. The need to develop key skills to manage complex projects and projects enacted in complex environments are considered (Floris and Cuganesan, 2019). The ability to manage resources to deliver the project, via encouraging dialogue between important stakeholders about critical issues, is paramount. Stakeholder expectations need to be managed and communication mechanisms utilised, in order to deliver project outcomes. Knowledge of best practice is needed together with the ability to analyse and resolve issues to make progress with complex challenges. The ability to manage resistance by identifying and accessing a range of power sources and utilising them to resolve issues is also vital. Traditional requirements to deliver prescribed project outcomes then negotiate success for stakeholders, based on a mutually constructed concept of value, are important here. This is based on research from Australia into complex projects.

The new approach to project management has developed by embracing an international perspective (Picciotto, 2019). The difficulty of planning in uncertain, complex environments is reflected, undertaking this review of the academic literature. The requirement to consider outcomes beyond the final results, regarding project impact is emphasised. The ability to utilise experimentation to permit adaptation of projects, to maximise success in terms of the intended consequences is critical. Traditional evaluation criteria should be discerned, namely achieving the designated objectives efficiently, and then be extended to enhancing positive societal and environmental impacts. The ability to select and engage suitable partners then assess their contribution to improve collective impact, is identified as an important skill. Using a multi-disciplinary approach to projects is important to maximise the prospects of success and the scope of such projects. The skill of evaluation and capacity to engage and incorporate independent evaluation is another vital component of this new project management 'movement'.

The need for innovation in business is discussed, in order to transition from an incremental to a more radical approach (Furr et al., 2019). This will create new business forms and mechanisms via disruptive creativity in the various sectors. The danger of established approaches is that they tend to be confirmatory, in terms of reinforcing the established position and existing beliefs. Tactics to encourage creativity are outlined, such as using examples from other areas and challenging the status quo by deconstructing the existing scenario and trying to develop a new approach. The skill development here is to establish creativity in the form of entrepreneurship and more agile techniques, where process innovation is employed to deliver assigned objectives (also, as per section 3.7 below, comprising a discussion of workplace productivity).

3.2 Hard and Soft Skills

A basic definition comprises dividing the areas of learning into 'Hard' and 'Soft' skills. The type of learning can be categorised as 'defined' and 'adaptive' or 'experiential'. 'Hard' skills are primarily technical and can be taught using defined methods and courses. The entire skill can be learned at such courses and completion can be via producing a professional or academic assignment or sitting an examination. This, hence, comprises learning a defined skill to an agreed standard. This form typically produces a qualification or certification to show that the candidate has achieved the required result. The entire skill can, thus, be imparted by the course. 'Soft' skills are related to people, thus need to be acquired by experience and this learning may only be valid in a particular context, contrasting with 'hard' skills which are typically accepted for general use. An accounting qualification is an example of developing a 'hard' skill, via examination and certification to established standards, whereas managing a department, including all of the accompanying power and political issues, is an example of a 'soft' skill with learning occurring in an adaptive, experiential manner, developing knowledge which may be specific to a particular context, such as business or company. The acquisition of a qualification may only comprise the achieving of the entry-level criteria for the profession. The extent to which that qualification is useful and the individual progresses in terms of their career may be wholly dependent on their developed 'soft' skills, exhibited in their dealings with personnel encountered in their working sphere. Most activities will involve some combination of the two types of skills, with the balance determined by the nature of the activity. The development of a plan, for example, can be a skill acquired by a taught course, in a real or virtual classroom. The final form of a business plan may need to incorporate the views of key stakeholders and may be subject to negotiation with them, requiring considerable aptitude in dealing with these individuals and groups together with knowledge of the specific context. The negotiation of a contract, for example, may require technical skill in understanding and contributing to the form but will also require skills in forging agreements with the key parties, to create and obtain consensus on the final document. Basic 'soft' skills can be developed, to some extent, via role playing and simulation, however, it may be impossible to replicate particular business contexts and the full range of skills required by an individual. These can only be experienced via practical application in the specific business context.

The optimum position is, therefore, to have the required technical skills and develop the ability to apply them via the use of interpersonal skills. This emphasises the need for a practitioner approach to learning. An individual's competences can, thus, be broadly categorised into: Intellect (IQ); Emotional (EI); Self-Management (such as resource management, organisation and communications). The aptitude of the individual and compatibility with the various professions is thus determined by the competences in these areas.

3.3 Leadership Skills

The requirement for the identification, acquisition and development of managerial competences is necessary for project managers and leaders (Muller and Turner,

2010). The standard individual competences are needed – but applied to a wider focus for the area of responsibility and assigned staff. The intellectual ability should include critical analysis of the topic area, a strategic perspective and, possibly, imagination and vision, to develop this area of business and gain new perspectives in its delivery. The competences associated with emotional intelligence should include empathy with the staff, resilience, sensitivity and cultural awareness (Fisher, 2011). The ability to influence and motivate should also be present. Managerial competences should include resource management for the area of responsibility, communication skills with the ability to develop and empower staff. Skill in managing and resolving conflict should be present, with the capacity to understand the situation, including behaviour, relating to the conduct of the business.

Leaders need to know how to adopt different roles, according to the circumstances in practice. This entails skills that can be acquired via courses, qualifications and practical experience (perhaps with a tutor or mentor). Leadership roles can be very directive (micromanagement) and a more supportive role, where staff are left to perform their tasks without intervention (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). The different roles can be characterised as four distinct areas: directing, where the staff receive direct instructions to perform tasks in a prescribed manner and have little discretion in the manner; coaching, where the staff are given instructions and feedback on their performance of the task. The aim is to develop the latter to a higher level; supporting, where the aim is to facilitate the staff in the performance of the task and ensure appropriate resources are available. High discretion is afforded in terms of task performance; delegating, where the staff are empowered to perform the task without intervention. Responsibility is devolved to the staff member. The circumstances, nature of the task and business environment, as well as the competence and character of the manager and staff members will determine the method chosen (which could change due to circumstances) and ultimate results.

Leaders may possess or adopt different styles, requiring different characteristics, to deliver the required results (Ancona et al., 2019). Types of leadership comprise: Entrepreneurs; Enabling Leaders; and Architects. ‘Entrepreneurs’ have self-confidence and are willing to act and possibly take risks. They have a strategic mindset, considering a broad remit and how to exploit it, as well as an ability to attract others to enable their initiatives to be enacted. ‘Enabling leaders’ are able to coach and develop staff and excel at building and using networks to connect with key personnel. ‘Architects’ take a strategic view, perhaps considering the long-term environments. They are prepared to make big changes, often embracing disruptive innovations or restructuring organisations to create future success and resilience. Recognition and development of these characteristics is essential for producing future leaders in all sectors of society.

3.4 Team Working

The ability of individuals to adapt and contribute effectively to team working is a vital skill. Many employers look for this as the most important aspect of recruiting new staff, after the basic qualifying criteria have been met. Skills acquisition should involve the development of team working skills. The ability to adopt different roles in teams at work and contribute effectively to team performance is a vital area for all

personnel. Most job roles involve different levels of team working, with employees assigned to several teams throughout the organisation. The pandemic has exacerbated this need, with the further requirement to acquire the skills of online collaboration to overcome the restrictions in movement, in order to allow business continuity and subsequent embedding of homeworking into working practice (Clark, 2020).

There is a considerable amount of research into identifying and developing team roles. A recent source is considered, outlining four main team roles: Pioneers; Guardians; Drivers; and Integrators (Johnson et al., 2017). 'Pioneers' are risk-takers and are attracted to new ideas. They consider the strategic picture and have entrepreneurial qualities. 'Guardians' value stability and order. They view learning from the past as a key facet in terms of development. 'Drivers' embrace challenges and tend to have a polar view of issues, judging them as 'right' or 'wrong'. 'Integrators' are the team facilitators. They value team working and collaboration. Their aim is to broker agreement among the team members. This research proposed that team under-performance is because the different combinations of types are not being managed properly, or the balance between them is incorrect. All of the personnel, who may exhibit characteristics of several types, have a contribution to make to the team outcomes. The problem is that different styles and personalities may lead to conflict among the team members. The solution is to try to reconcile the differing views and ensure all members are valued and are granted the opportunity to make an appropriate contribution. Team members who possess several styles can help in reconciling the team and eliminating the conflict to gain a consensus. The most effective teams have good systems of control and attend to both the team output requirements and the development needs of the individual members.

3.5 Portfolio Approach

Evidence is of a current and future skills 'gap' in organisations (for example technology-based) that may inhibit future development. Learning also needs to be applied, so the importance of learning from experience and being able to put into practice learning gleaned from the classroom (physical or online) is increasingly important. The accumulation of skills to enable job performance is now viewed as a career-long activity, rather than a prelude to employment. A portfolio of skills is required and these need to be developed, enhanced and increased to a wider remit, throughout an individual's career (Moldoveanu and Narayandas, 2019). There is a stronger emphasis on online delivery of learning that even some of the most traditional institutions have embraced. This trend has been accelerated by the global pandemic, which has promoted the virtual learning environment over the physical classroom. The notion of the 'personal learning cloud' was proposed. The learning is delivered by multiple providers and is personalised, in respect of being tailored to the individual and their development requirements. The aim is to socialise with others via networks, which allow support and further learning to occur. The learning should be focussed on development in a professional context and can be authenticated, with the validating provider being capable of being tracked from this personal learning portfolio. The funding of this learning can be from several sources, public or private sponsorship, student loans and apprentice arrangements, for example.

3.6 Levels of Progression

Progression in skills acquisition is demonstrated via experience and the ability to perform at certain levels (Cicmil et al., 2006). The individual is given or assumes appropriate responsibilities, to match this level. An example of this is demonstrated by research into progression via experience for project leaders. The range of different levels spans basic, namely the 'Novice' level, to advanced, termed the 'Expert'. The 'Novice' relies on rule-based solutions, so a set of instructions has to be followed to make decisions. The 'Advanced Beginner' uses 'trial and error' to make decisions based on experiential methods. The 'Competent' project leader prioritises procedures for decision making, so can add order to experience. The 'Proficient' project leader understands the context so can reflect and analyse the situation to produce decisions. The 'Expert' relies on intuition and rational process, based on extensive experience. The latter is able to go directly to a good solution, using knowledge and skills. The aim in skills acquisition and development is to obtain these skills via experience to reach the 'Expert' level. This may have to occur many times, as new skills and areas of practice are encountered, that invalidate former knowledge.

3.7 Creativity

The importance of recruiting and fostering creativity in the work environment is identified (Kellerman and Seligman, 2023). Several types of creativity are mentioned: integration; splitting; figure-ground reversal; distal thinking. 'Integration' is showing that apparently different entities have a level of similarity that could permit configuration. The example utilised is the mobile smartphone, combining camera, internet access, music players with telephone communications facilities. 'Splitting' is dividing entities into several parts to achieve enhancement. An example is that of a factory production line, enabling division of labour and efficiencies of scale. 'Figure-ground reversal' is based on being able to reverse focus in order to obtain a novel perspective. The example of using two points on Earth to track a satellite was given. It was realised that this could be reversed so that satellites could track points on Earth, leading to the creation of the Global Positioning System. 'Distal thinking' comprises the use of imagination to consider a radically different future, such as the 'self-driving' car.

The recommendation was that teams should contain members who could be creative in several of these different ways. This will facilitate problem- solving, including the creation of new products, services and techniques, which could advance the organisation in its environment. The optimum mix of these different types of creativity is required on the team, as determined by the work topic, organisation and its context.

The need for innovation in different areas is acknowledged, in the post pandemic era. The digitisation of society, accelerated by the restrictions on the movement of populations in order to prevent the spread of COVID, is cited as an example of a discipline requiring new theories to assist analysis, rather than continuing to utilise existing theory (Grover and Lyytinen, 2023). The bias towards the latter tendency

was discussed, considering the publication of a sample of articles on this topic by the major academic journals. The need for this novel theorising to inform the IT discipline is therefore stated. This reinforces the requirement for recruitment and development to include creativity within its remit.

3.8 Employee Value

The retention and recruitment of personnel can be effectively addressed by an holistic consideration of value, offered to employees (Mortensen and Edmondson, 2023). This is defined as comprising several elements offered to staff, namely material, development, community and purpose. The proposition was made that if the emphasis was chiefly on the material aspects, usually remuneration, then this was likely to only have a temporary effect. The offer of potential employee development, such as training and career progression programmes, would be more attractive on an individual level. The offer of collective value, such as a supportive workplace network or community, and an attractive purpose, such as providing an important service to society, would also be more important and, potentially, longer term in effect.

The problem of retaining a wholly online mode of working, in the post pandemic time, was highlighted. This could suit individuals and allow them to be effective but may affect collective performance, due to inhibition of mentoring and team interaction. The need for some co-located working to enhance these activities was thus suggested.

The match between people and the organisation (termed POF, Person-Organisation Fit) can be considered, in respect of Business Model Innovation (Menter et al., 2022). The Business Model comprises the configuration of resources that the organisation employs to deliver value. This research concluded that incremental, evolutionary change to the Business Model did not materially affect the POF and may even lead to improvements in this factor. Major, revolutionary change to the Business Model, however, caused a decrease in POF. The match between the employee and organisation depends on such elements as skills, development, socialisation, career aspirations. Incremental change in the organisational context could improve the match between people and organisation, as it is likely to be informed by the workforce and their requirements. Major change, for a strategic or operational reason, is more likely to have been initiated by external considerations, such as a new market, product or system. This could then lead to new skills being required, new workgroups, some jobs being made redundant and changes to personal development and career aspirations. This was found to have a negative effect on the POF. The importance of recruiting appropriate staff, with potential for future development, is thus emphasised. Employees and potential employees should also try to match their skills and personal characteristics to the organisational requirements and try to develop in accordance with projected future strategy and personal aspirations.

4 Findings

Several interviews were conducted with an industry practitioner, based on the identification of the learning process, in respect of a project and business management course. The relevance of formal academic qualifications to practice was considered. The measures required to enhance the employability of graduating students, via course design, were obtained. The results of this empirical study analysed and codified into themes.

4.1 Perspective

The perspective of courses was questioned by the respondent, who stated that the *'organisational lens is missing from degrees'*. These qualifications should consider the requirements of organisations and actively prepare the students for them, via the degree teaching content. This will align with graduate employability objectives for educational institutions.

The need for flexibility in studying and obtaining qualifications is stressed in the literature, in the form of the 'portfolio approach' to learning (Moldoveanu and Narayandas, 2019). This will allow workers to acquire skills whilst still working and being allowed to study part-time and virtually, for instance, in a more accommodating manner.

4.2 Skill Levels

A fundamental skillset is required for students, to enhance their employability. *'People need basic skills, such as writing emails'*, as stated by the respondent. This should be considered as part of their education. The course content, including formative and summative assessments, should, therefore, be designed to ensure students have these basic business skills. Attainment of the latter should, especially, be considered in the assessment of the students, thus encompassing grading, including passing the qualification. The levels of progression attained by project managers are considered in the literature, for example (Cicmil et al., 2006)

4.3 Flexibility

'Work experience would benefit students'. The use of 'sandwich' courses to provide a year of placement with an employer with an assessment and monitoring process, managed by the employer and personal tutor is recommended. This will permit the student to glean valuable knowledge of and confidence in a work environment.

This is highlighted in the academic literature, for example in discussing the portfolio approach to learning (Moldoveanu and Narayandas, 2019) and the research journey (Blair & Pagano, 2021a).

'Hybrid work requires more trust, self-organisation and new techniques.' The move to virtual working at home, during the restrictions of the pandemic, has led to the evolution of work. Many organisations now use a hybrid model, comprising a mix of working at home and the office. This has placed new requirements on employees and led to the creation of new working environments. The requirement for virtual

learning and working in virtual teams is also noted in the academic literature (for instance, Blair and Pagano, (2021c) and Blair, G., & Pagano, R. (2020)).

4.4 Knowledge Gaps

'Gaps in knowledge are present in current qualifications, for example operational risk management and sustainability.' The respondent identified important areas of expertise that are absent from many current qualifications. These included the practical application of risk management, namely identifying and assessing key risks then introducing measures to mitigate them and provide contingencies. The determination of feasible sustainability actions, in respect of the environment and business, were also included in this statement. These key points are addressed in several publications (such as Blair, Woodcock & Pagano, 2021; Blair & Pagano, 2021b).

4.5 Application to Work

'Operational project management in a business environment is needed.' The practical element of project management should be the focus of courses, using a business context as illustration. This will help students to understand the rationale, tools and techniques that can be applied in business, as well as the potential environment. This will assist in preparing them for practice and hence help them to be 'work ready' candidates for employment.

The capacity to produce solutions to work issues was mentioned. The need to communicate effectively and be able to manage people and situations to get the desired results was also emphasised. *'Soft skills and problem-solving ability are needed'*, according to the respondent. These are vital areas for students to perform, effectively and, hence, show their potential to contribute to a work environment.

The respondent suggested that many employers seek to *'recruit potential and train to be effective staff. Candidates need to fit in as well as have required skills and qualifications.'* The necessity of hiring employees with the potential aptitude for the job then providing training in order to attain the requisite level of expertise, is proposed.

Articles on project management (Blair, Barratt, Pagano, 2022), creativity in employees (Kellerman and Seligman, 2023) and teamworking (in a virtual environment, Blair & Pagano, 2020), for example, reflect some of these themes.

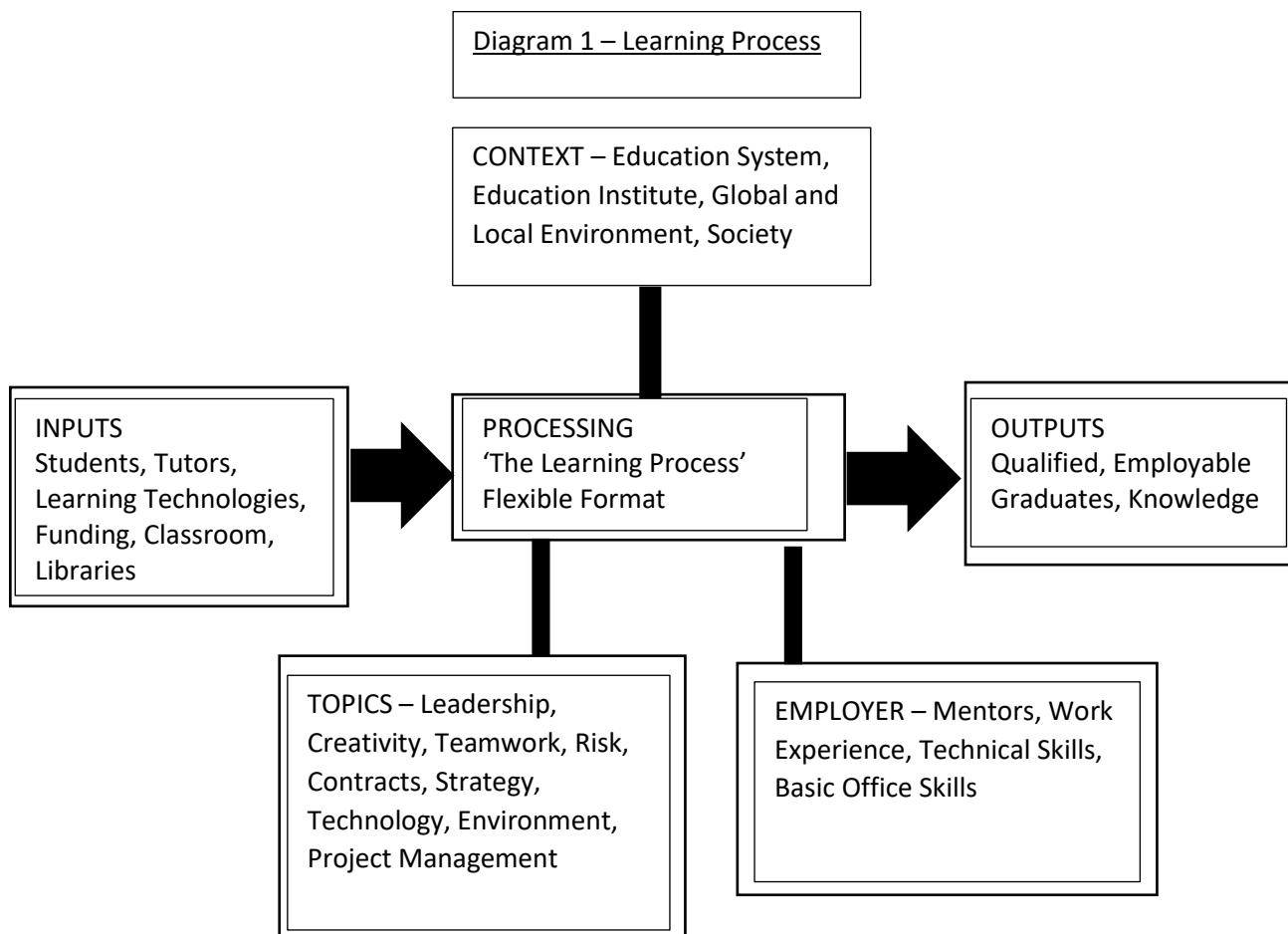
4.6 Mentors

'Mentorships should be used, giving students access to a pool of workplace professionals to make work-ready.' The suggestion was made by the respondent that an arrangement with suitable organisations be enacted by educational institutions. This should allow students to receive guidance from employees, in respect of the work environment. This comprises a mentor relationship, with the students' academic education being supplemented by input in the practitioner sphere. This will enhance the provision of education in business degree subjects. These areas are discussed

in the literature, for example in respect of research (Blair & Pagano, 2021a) and skills development in public sector organisations (Blair, Barratt & Pagano, 2022).

5 Discussion

The main aspects of the 'Learning Process' are outlined, utilising a systems approach (as per Diagram 1). Soft Systems Methodology techniques were employed to organise the principal themes from the research (after Checkland and Scholes, 1990). This is based on the example of creating a Masters-level course in business or project management at an educational institution. The main inputs were identified, such as: funding; learning technologies; libraries; classrooms (which could be virtual); tutors; and students. The learning process was the main activity, comprising a collaboration between students and tutors, in the educational context, with inputs from the employer to achieve the main outputs, which include a defined standard of learning, knowledge and qualified, employable graduates. The context that regulates and sustains this educational process is the education system and institute, global and local environments and, ultimately, society. The premise is that education can provide socially-useful graduates, who can be readily employed. The employers also participate in this system, providing workplace mentors, work experience and access to technical and office skills. They could perhaps also provide funding and a direct route for graduate employment. The main course topics were suggested as: leadership (Blair & Pagano, 2020); creativity (Kellerman and Seligman, 2023); teamwork (Blair & Pagano, 2020); risk (Blair, Woodcock & Pagano, 2021); contracts (Blair, Woodcock, Pagano, 2022); strategy (Blair, Barratt & Pagano, 2021); technology (Blair, Grant & Woodcock, 2020), (Blair & Pagano, 2023); the environment (Blair & Pagano, 2021b); and project management (Blair, Barratt & Pagano, 2022). Examples of the literature are cited with these topics. The 'Learning Process' is thus defined in terms of a systems approach. The delivery format should be flexible, permitting different forms of learning including full and part time, virtual and in-person, synchronous and asynchronous, in order to accommodate different learning styles.



6 Conclusion

A thematic analysis of key literatures on skills development was undertaken and a framework, illustrating the main elements in the learning process, was constructed via an empirical study, in order to summarise this area in the form of a systems diagram. The importance of the skills development process, as being critical to successful organisations and society, was emphasised. This research could be further developed with future empirical studies in a range of sectors, analysing the skills development process.

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Dr. Garry Blair
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CHAPTER 6 - Managing Global Projects

A Strategy for Managing Global Projects: Critical Activities from Practice.

Dr Garry Blair, Helen Woodcock and Dr Rosane Pagano

ABSTRACT:

Global projects have been utilised to create many vital products and services, including iconic buildings and even ventures into space. International collaborations have been required in many areas, in order to access the required resources for key projects. The management of such projects has, however, been fraught with difficulties. These projects are typically large scale and characterised by substantial cost and time overruns, where the original planned timescale and budget are exceeded. This paper considers the management of global projects, focusing on good practice to deliver the specified outcomes.

The requirement for good communications is highlighted. A system is needed, incorporating a method to check understanding between the project personnel, especially in respect of different nationalities. The facility to translate and filter information, as required, is mentioned. The aim is to encourage collaboration between the different parties involved in running the project. The importance of cultural sensitivity is stressed, ensuring that national characteristics are accommodated in the working practices and relationships. The use of a detailed plan as an integrating mechanism to coordinate the project activities across national boundaries is recommended. The delivery of the required outcomes will probably include the management of both virtual and in-person teams, possibly in different countries. This will generate challenges for the leadership of these concerns, which are noted. The requirement to adopt sustainable practices, even at the expense of profit, is recommended. This will promote an environmentally-friendly rationale, consistent with national and global standards.

A review of key journals was enacted, in order to identify important themes. An interview was conducted with a practitioner from a firm that runs international projects. The main aim was to gather knowledge of good practice for running global projects. A template for the creation of a strategy for managing such projects was compiled, identifying critical activities for effective delivery of the specified outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Global Project; Megaproject; Strategy; Communications System; Project Plan; Sustainable Practices; Cultural Sensitivity.

1 Introduction

Global projects are essential to the world economy. They are needed to construct vital infrastructure and create products to advance human development and guarantee economic growth. Many of these are megaprojects, which were classified as projects with a budget exceeding 10 billion US dollars in the construction industry.

There are now several projects that exceed 100 billion US dollars in respect of their budget (Buchholz, 2023), showing the increased value of this area. A Global Project can be defined as 'a task that requires a lot of time and effort' that is 'being or having to do with a business, operation, system....carried on or extending throughout all or much of the world' (Collins Dictionary, 2023) and a megaproject is 'a very large, expensive or ambitious business project' (Collins Dictionary, 2023). This is the area of research for this article.

1.1 Problem Statement

Global projects are, typically, subject to significant cost and time overruns. This leads to them being regarded as failures in terms of implementation and, sometimes, the actual products and services. This research comprises an investigation into this type of project, via a review of selected literature and an empirical study. The focus is on discerning potential good practice, in order to improve the outcomes of these enterprises.

1.2 Research Objective

The aim of this article is to utilise recommended good practice to formulate a template which will help organisations to create an effective strategy for managing global projects.

2 Methodology

A review of selected articles was enacted from key journals. This was followed by a thematic analysis, in order to determine the critical activities for global projects. An interview with a practitioner was held and the results were also analysed into themes. The interview format was semi-structured, thus using several predetermined questions but allowing for further questions, based on the respondent's answers. This gives some flexibility to the interview. The practitioner is a leading executive of a firm that manages international projects. The data, both from the literature and the interview, was organised into themes, without a predetermined coding structure. The technique was to employ 'grounded methods' in order to generate knowledge in the research area (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991; Blair and Pagano, 2021a). The objective was to contribute to practice via the creation of a template for a strategy to manage global projects. The research results, in respect of the critical activities, were illustrated using a 'systems approach' (as per Checkland and Scholes, 1990 and utilised in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2023), in order to contribute to theory in this sphere and summarise the learning in respect of this research. A framework to assist practitioners was, therefore, produced (after Blair, Pagano and Burns, 2019).

3 Literature Review

A review of selected journal articles was conducted. The main themes were noted using a 'grounded approach' in order to analyse the data from the literature.

3.1 Communications

The use of digital platforms to assist organisations with innovation is considered by Ferdows et al. (2022). This article discusses the role of a digital supply facility in enabling a network for collaboration and problem-solving. An example is given of a company that created a digital platform that encourages such sharing in a structure that facilitates open communications. The platform mainly addresses the supply chain but the networking aspect extends the usage. The introduction and activities of other companies are not restricted in a manner usually found in such facilities. The platform is configured to allow open communications and encourage collaboration between participating organisations. This means that these member organisations can confer to solve their own problems, perhaps independently of the host.

This displays trust in the collaborating organisations. The article suggests that this approach has led to process improvements and productivity gains for the host and other organisations in the network. The benefits have, hence, exceeded the straightforward linking of supplier companies to deliver a service. Both product and process can be enhanced by such a collaboration. The notion of a 'digital twin' was mentioned, namely the digital modelling of a physical entity to enable design, development and maintenance improvements.

The use of such networks is vital to global projects, as a number of suppliers will probably be required to work in different countries in order to deliver the required outcomes. The facilities to promote cooperation amongst these companies in order to solve problems in international projects is essential. This type of project tends to be complex and requires creative solutions, perhaps in multiple countries via different organisations. This will probably require a more informal network with an association of organisations taking responsibility to solve the problems. The contractual arrangements are, hence, likely to be more flexible and focus on using trusted partners, rather than more traditional fixed contracts to deliver specified tasks. There should also be a vetting process for suppliers, in order to ensure suitable organisations are recruited as trusted partners. This could involve a trial period, checks on financial position and references from valid organisations.

These networks may require different personnel with a variety of skills, depending on the project tasks and their timing. The networks may need to change their partner companies, depending on tasks and location, in order to support different countries, for example. Different projects may have varied timescales and requirements, necessitating different combinations of organisations in order to successfully deliver their prescribed outcomes. The need for flexible collaborations in the form of these networks is, thus, evident.

An example of a global project is considered in respect of space travel, by Weinzierl et al. (2022). The opportunities for companies to have a 'space strategy' are addressed. The exploration of space has long been an area of international collaborations, for example both the International Space Station and the US Artemis project to land people on the moon involve international partners, in both cases NASA and the European and Japanese space agencies, for example. This article discusses the growing private sector contribution to this area, involving companies from different nations. Space is viewed as a potential area for innovation and a diverse range of products are cited. Four areas of potential growth, therefore

possible international collaborations, are discussed, namely data (gathering data from Earth, for example), capabilities (using the unique properties of space such as zero gravity to develop pharmaceuticals), resources (accessing the mineral deposits there, for example) and markets (fulfilling the needs of space tourists, for instance). These are all areas for current and future projects.

The attributes that characterise successful international cooperation in this sphere, to optimise the delivery of project outcomes, are discussed. Experimentation is viewed as being vital to such projects, in order to determine innovative solutions in a novel area. The discretion to allow projects to fail quickly is seen as being important, in that viable solutions can be determined as different options are evaluated quickly, with acceptable resource costs. This contrasts with the common attitude that major projects are not allowed to fail, due to the scale of the past investment, so further funding is provided to these projects, thus increasing the final cost of any failures. The requirement for an effective team, including international partners, who work together to achieve innovative solutions to the project problems, is discussed. The team members need to have the right qualities and comprise a suitable blend of personalities and skills to complete the project.

The private sector now provides many resources for such projects, for example the Artemis program, which has many contractors including companies from different nations. This has tended to reduce the costs of such enterprises, for example satellite building and launch.

Firms that work together in such enterprises will tend to operate as collaborative partnerships, rather than strictly adhering to contracts, in terms of their relationships (Frydlinger et al, 2019). The latter would be too constrictive to accommodate the exploratory, innovative nature of this type of project.

3.2 Learning / Planning

The importance of learning from failure is stated by Birkinshaw and Haas (2022). The problem of risk aversion and fear of failure is highlighted by this article. The requirement to encourage learning from failure and to utilise a structured approach, in order to maximise the potential benefits from analysing the scenario, is detailed. These authors suggest an inventory of failure, defining the assets and liabilities from the situation. A clear comprehension of the costs, benefits and potential benefits can, therefore, be obtained.

The problem of risk averse behaviour in organisations is noted. This potentially leads to opportunities being missed and a failure to advance the organisation in respect of the environment. This could lead to loss of market share, profits and business, in relation to competitors.

The importance of the leadership team setting the example and, thus, determining the culture was stressed. The acceptance of failure as an essential component of a focus on experimentation is needed. A 'learning audit' can be enacted to glean knowledge from any organisational failure. Projects should have a clear review

mechanism and this audit can be incorporated into their ongoing process, as periodic feedback or a final analysis.

A culture that encourages experimentation and permits failure should be created, according to this literature. The organisation could make arrangements so that the potential failures are limited in terms of resources, so that the costs of failure are kept to a minimum. If scope for innovation is limited by risk-averse behaviour then the organisation could fail to develop, realise opportunities for enhancement and ultimately stagnate.

Global projects require risk-taking and innovation to succeed. The need to learn from whole or partial project failures is necessary, in respect of these complex entities, to develop organisations and networks that are capable of delivering these projects and achieving successful outcomes.

Research into infrastructure megaproject failure was enacted by Juarez Cornelio et al. (2023). These comprise large capital-intensive transport and energy projects and many global projects are similar in both purpose and scale, as well as exhibiting aspects of failure. The termination of this type of megaproject at the construction stage is a critical decision and many global projects are subject to this consideration, principally due to their complexity and scale. This article examined case studies to determine aspects of their failure. Learning can, hence, be derived from these projects, in order to assist current and future implementations. The principal areas for failure were determined.

The issue with megaprojects is that, after considerable expenditure, cancellation may not be considered as an option, due to the prospect of having no positive results for this investment. The process of termination, namely the premature end of the project without realising the specified benefits, is viewed as being subject to the impetus created by negative results and the prospect of poor outcomes.

Termination of a megaproject can, according to these authors, be caused by several factors:

- Government intervention due to changes in policy or administration or social opposition;
- Problems with cash flow and funding;
- Changes in the prevailing technology or demand lead to the project delivery and objectives no longer being regarded as valid in the current environment;
- Environmental concerns lead to the cancellation of the project, as the original basis is no longer viewed as being viable;
- A change in regulations or failure to comply with current regulations mean the project is stopped;
- External, unpredictable factors lead to cancellation, such as extreme weather and the pandemic.

This permits project personnel to discern key areas to monitor, in order to detect potential causes of failure. This could allow action to be taken to prevent this

occurring or a reduction of project resources, in order to reduce potential losses on termination.

It should be noted that termination may be the most beneficial course of action, depending on the circumstances, in order to preserve resources and minimise losses.

3.3 Project Manager

The optimal management of megaprojects is considered by Flyvbjerg (2021). These are large, capital intensive, complex projects and global projects can usually be classed in this category. Megaprojects are often infrastructural and have complex IT and governance requirements. The international aspect adds a further layer of complexity to these projects, with differences of culture, language, currency, location and time zone to be considered, for example. This author cites several examples of good and inferior practice, in the form of large, mostly international projects. This article makes a number of recommendations to assist with gaining successful project outcomes.

The author suggests that these projects should utilise existing technology, as implementing innovative technology will probably lead to delays. These are likely to be caused by the learning required to employ such technologies. The use of standard, proven technology provides a more reliable basis for such higher-risk concerns. The innovative use of delivery techniques, however, could be applied in order to aid project progress. An example was given of a project utilising extra teams, more than usual in the industry, working longer hours to complete the work in a shorter timescale than comparable projects.

The need to make the project modular, if possible, was stated. This means implementing these projects in discrete, individual sections. These should be capable of operation, so that value is delivered early. This helps with credibility and possibly liquidity, as early benefits can be accrued, thus assisting the impetus of the project.

The ability to make accurate predictions is also considered, as megaprojects require the future environment to be understood, often over a considerable period, in order to make decisions regarding supply and demand. The suggestion is that one year is the maximum dependable time frame to make accurate predictions. Conditions beyond this period are, therefore, prone to inaccuracy and not reliable. This means that large global projects need to be delivered over relatively short periods, in modular fashion, so that the operating environment can be understood. The requirement to learn from each delivery is also stated. The result is that the techniques for managing the projects and, potentially, the outputs themselves, can be improved in each successive delivery.

The requirement for non-disruptive innovation is noted (by Kim and Mauborgne, 2023). These authors state that disruptive change can be problematic because it

usually involves the loss of business, including jobs and even companies, due to the potential replacement of prevailing technologies, goods and services by superior innovations within existing markets. The move to streaming films is an example, causing the demise of the video rental industry.

The creation of new products and services can be innovative, creating new markets that did not previously exist, as well as disruptive, within existing markets. The new product, such as streaming films, may create new markets, for example to mobile communications devices, that creates new demand as well as disrupting existing business by replacing the video rental operations.

Non-disruptive innovation will create totally new markets with demand for the products and services that does not affect existing markets, according to this literature. This type of innovation is recommended by the authors, as there is no counterbalancing, negative effect. There are solely positive gains, in terms of profits, employment and the social effects. The implementation of microfinance to permit low income individuals to have credit, usually in the form of loans, and also the introduction of space tourism are given as examples of non-disruptive innovation using existing technology and new technology, respectively. They have the advantage of providing pure benefits rather than the net benefits of disruptive innovation, because of the absence of the societal costs of disruption, as existing businesses are removed or reduced in terms of scale of operations.

Global projects should, if possible, be focused on non-disruptive change in order to maximise the potential gains. This category of project is usually large, complex and operating across at least one international boundary. The potential for disruptive and non-disruptive change is, therefore, high. The premise of this article is that these projects should focus on the latter to obtain maximum societal benefits.

An analysis of good practice from an expert in achieving successful outcomes for complex megaprojects is considered in Flyvbjerg and Gardner (2023). The main themes of project management techniques, as employed by this individual were reviewed, in order to learn from successful practice.

The requirement to have sufficient power in the organisation to perform the job and deliver the agreed results was stated. This is to ensure that all of the tasks that the project manager determines as being necessary are implemented to their designated standards.

The importance of understanding the rationale of the project is stressed. The need to determine the motivation for proposed work is viewed as being vital. This will provide the project manager with the context for the project and should facilitate decision-making, having a clear comprehension of its objectives.

The initial phase of the project is seen as being critical, in terms of delivery. The key activities here are simulation, iteration and testing. The repeated consideration of the initial specification and plan of work, in order to verify that it is valid from the perspective of the main stakeholders and feasible in terms of delivery is seen as being essential. The use of simulations, which could be computerised for example, is

considered to be a major component of a successful project. These can be developed iteratively, so a perspective is developed then reviewed, possibly using a customer viewpoint, then the original prototype is amended, based on this feedback. The process is then repeated until all parties are satisfied, with a compromise being reached in the case of constraints.

The key is to emphasise the planning phase and take the time to ensure that all of the critical assumptions are verified, as much as possible. The premise is that corrections are much less expensive at the initial, design stage than after the commencement of the delivery phase, when resources have been committed. Extensive testing and simulation are used to establish a comprehensive plan for delivery, where assumptions have been verified as much as possible before project execution commences.

3.4 Stakeholders

The commissioning of megaprojects and subsequent escalation of costs, delays in delivery and increases in scope that characterise such entities are considered by Gil (2023). The difference in focus between considerations pre and post commissioning of the projects is addressed. This entails a variation in perspectives of value. The requirement is to demonstrate value for money and that the project objectives will be delivered on time and within budget. This will result in the project being commissioned by the main stakeholders, as the specification comprises a credible proposal that will meet their expectations both in terms of the product or service and the implementation. The international project's initiation may, thus, depend on a limited group of major stakeholders, possibly in different countries, who have the power to commission the project. The typical course of such projects then embraces additions to the scope, especially in the government sector, where funding is from the public purse. Delays to such projects are also common, due to these scope increases and problems with resourcing and delivery. Financial issues are also prevalent, as the budget is exceeded due to these problems. The estimated cost of the project is, therefore, inflated beyond the original, agreed figure that was proposed when the project was approved. This could be viewed as being the result of incompetent project management, including poor estimating of the required resources and accompanying delivery timetables. This article, however, suggests that a change in perspective occurs, post-commissioning, that accounts for these delays and resource issues. This is a refocusing of the view of value from a few main stakeholders, in order to complete the commissioning process, to a wider group of stakeholders. This allows the benefits of the project to be maximised and potentially spread to a more distributed group. This will include stakeholders in more than one country for this type of project. The refocusing of emphasis is required in order to ensure that the project is commissioned and the maximum benefits are obtained, according to this literature. The potential problem is that the project is regarded as a failure and perhaps even cancelled prior to completion, if traditional criteria are utilised in order to assess its delivery. It is argued that this rationale, the refocusing of the project, needs to be comprehended and accepted in order to gain the full benefits from the enterprise.

3.5 Environment

The literature (Shih, 2020) considers the position of supply chains, after the severe disruption of the pandemic. Global supply chains are required for many international projects, in order to ensure that the necessary materials and services are available to execute the project tasks and achieve the prescribed outcomes. These supply chains are also needed for the maintenance phase, when the project is implemented and comprises an ongoing concern. The article highlights the issues caused by global sourcing of services and commodities, in order to leverage the advantages of seeking the optimum supplier from an international perspective. This practice had severe disadvantages due to the restrictions on movement in the pandemic, leading to supply shortages. The author considers the consequences of shortening the supply chains by sourcing more locally. This may cause problems with projects and routine work, as there may be higher costs, lack of capacity and lack of expertise and sufficient labour. The solution proposed is to have a more local supplier as an additional source but to still maintain global suppliers. This will provide alternatives in the case of supply chain disruption. The need to maintain some stocks of products was also suggested. This should provide a buffer against short term interruptions to the supply chain. The provision will have additional costs, though, and contradicts the trend of 'just in time' techniques of supply. The latter comprises a 'lean' set of arrangements for minimising stocks by supplying products and services at the times and in the amounts that they are required in the value chain, thus saving on storage costs, for instance. Technological advances may also improve the supply chain performance by permitting faster, more efficient delivery.

This article notes that political issues can also disrupt global supply chains. The United Kingdom's exit from the European Union and the conflict in the Ukraine are examples, as well as political tensions between countries. The provisions outlined above should offer a level of resilience to organisations, in respect of global supply chain disruption. This will be required in order to ensure the successful delivery of outcomes for international projects.

The symbolic aspects of megaprojects are considered by Floricel and Brunet (2023). Large, iconic projects that are international collaborations can be symbolic statements by their creators, for example buildings and bridges. The use of symbols by the project stakeholders is discussed. These can be employed to assist the project completion or appropriated by opposing groups to try to stop or delay the project. The properties of these symbols are considered and categorised by these authors, forming a process centred on the project. The symbols can be abstract, concrete, affective and cognitive. Different stakeholders form networks associated with the project. These then express abstract symbols, such as values associated with the project, and concrete symbols, such as the imagined final form of the project. The symbols are communicated in an effort to influence others in the network. They create a representation of the project which makes an impression on the stakeholder network. The latter comprises an affective, namely emotional, influence or a cognitive, namely rational, influence. This creates symbols for the project which form an image of the project that influences the stakeholder networks.

Concepts such as 'national pride' and an 'iconic building', for example, can be used to rally support for the project among the various stakeholders. These can also be used to focus opposition to the project, for example, 'waste of money' and 'ugly building'.

This article proposes a model for creating these symbols to support or oppose the project. The international aspect can make such symbolism more complex, as it will have different cultural contexts. This could also lead to different symbols depending on nationality and different images of the project. This symbolism can, hence, contribute to the success or failure of these enterprises in respect of both implementation and the final product.

The contextual factors of a megaproject are considered in a qualitative study of a company (Galvin et al, 2021). The latter runs this type of project and a selection of the staff were interviewed for this study. The critical factors of governance, trust and culture were considered and the analysis focused on the potential for opportunistic behaviour, where a firm acts in its own interests, disregarding the interests of other parties in the project. The use of 'alliance' contacts was discussed, where a collaborative approach was employed, rather than the usual transactional contract, where payment was earned for the completion of specified work and the terms are clearly defined. The problem with megaprojects is their complexity and long duration, which is especially true of global projects. This means that a more collaborative approach is preferable, as many aspects of the work cannot be initially defined. The specification of work would, hence, be unsuitable for a transactional contract. The requirement is for a partnership with other companies, promoting cooperation to solve the project problems.

Governance was viewed as being important, in that the structure of the project could facilitate a partnership approach. The managerial arrangements should be designed to encourage collaboration, including the accomplishment of shared objectives, rather than partners pursuing their own interests. This could include co-location of team members from different companies as well as allocating coordination roles to individuals, in order to ensure that all of the parties work together for the common interest. This is, generally, more difficult in a global project, unless personnel are seconded to the team and relocated to the same physical workplace. The prevalence of virtual working has facilitated the composition of teams from different locations, however online socialisation will need to occur in these cases.

The use of shared culture to encourage collaboration in the project is mentioned. The culture of an organisation is defined as being formulated through formal items, such as procedures, rules and codes of conduct, and informal mechanisms, such as rituals, jargon and 'stories'. The sharing of cultural norms and values could be encouraged between the project personnel from all of the partners. This should stimulate a collective approach to the work. The essential aspect of a global project is to find these norms and values via the project work and be sensitive to other cultures.

The importance of trust between the project personnel is emphasised. This can be defined as 'calculative' trust, that is based on rational arrangements, such as a

contract. This could be favoured for megaprojects, rather than 'affect-based' trust, which is focused on personal relationships and emotional ties, due the temporary nature of this type of enterprise. Trust, in terms of reliance on partners without formal arrangements, can be developed through working on long projects and multiple projects. This will tend to reduce opportunistic behaviour, where one organisation acts wholly in its own interest, and encourage collaborative behaviour. The length of global projects should facilitate this type of trust, provided the required outcomes are obtained.

A model to assist global software development projects was proposed by Drechsler and Breth (2019). The principal potential environmental challenges were identified, namely language, time zones, geographic distance and culture. The projects would need to accommodate differences in these factors, in respect of the various countries involved in these developments. Several key elements were mentioned as requirements for the successful operation of this work. These comprised: an appropriate organisational structure; the means to transfer knowledge to the required personnel; suitable methods of communications and the encouraging of collaboration; a clear development process to form a mechanism for delivering the project outcomes. The main objective was to implement the project within the required time and budget constraints, attaining the designated standard of quality. The authors state that this model was primarily designed for projects that are run using traditional, linear methods, rather than an Agile methodology.

This article provides an holistic perspective of the environment, context and processes for this type of global project.

4 Findings

A semi-structured interview was held with the director of a company that runs international projects, comprising technology and services. The interview data was then organised into themes and compared with the literature, in order to provide further analysis of the research results.

4.1 Communications

The respondent stated that 'A key factor is a transparent relationship and good communications between all of the parties.' The requirement for an efficient mechanism to exchange information and satisfactory protocols to establish standards and assist meaning, is thus stated. The use of translation software, a common language and 'sense checking' to ensure understanding may be required to improve this aspect.

4.2 Learning / Planning

The need for learning to occur in the project is noted and the resultant knowledge should be retained and deployed as required, especially in the planning process. This data should be filtered in order to ensure the correct level of knowledge is disseminated to the appropriate stakeholders. This is complicated by the project spanning national boundaries, so the correct context needs to be applied, for

instance in terms of language and currency. The sharing of knowledge and verification of understanding are, hence, critical activities for global projects, in terms of their progress.

The requirement for a plan with timings and defined tasks was suggested. 'You need explicit, published timeframes with clear objectives and scope.' The control of the temporal aspects of projects is essential. International projects need a high degree of coordination, so delays in one aspect can have significant negative impact on the final outcomes. The creation of an appropriate strategy is noted in the literature (Blair, Barratt and Pagano, 2021) as well as planning and change management (Blair, Barratt and Pagano, 2022).

4.3 Project Manager

The leadership aspect is addressed in the statement, 'The project manager should lead the project activities. Do not rely on a third party to perform this role.' The importance of the company taking control of the project was stressed. The responsibility for these projects is with the company, so it was viewed as being important to have direct control, even if other companies were hired to perform project tasks. Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2023) consider the leadership aspects.

4.4 Stakeholders

The issue of dealing with other stakeholders is mentioned. 'Conflicting demands characterise these projects. Some of the parties may have other priorities.' The project manager may have to accept that other influences are exerted on the project resources and objectives by some of the stakeholders. These may be inside or outside the company. It could be necessary to employ a range of tactics, from cooperation to coercion, to ensure success. The respondent considers this in the statement, 'Relationship-building is crucial for these projects. The perspective is that of a relationship rather than a dictatorship.' The importance of collaboration to achieve successful outcomes is stressed as the preferred approach. Global projects tend to be unique and have non-standard problems to overcome. Cooperative relationships are viewed as being preferable to assist in solving such problems, using combined efforts. This approach can facilitate cooperation for future projects, by building a network of partners (as per Blair, Barratt and Pagano, 2023).

'Cultural sensitivity is critical to international projects. The project manager and team should understand the various working environments.' The international dimension is considered by the respondent. The need to respect the different cultures encompassed by the project is highlighted. This could include holidays, attitudes towards work and practices, for instance. It is important to accommodate cultural variations, in order to avoid alienating these personnel (Galvin et al., 2021).

'Timings of meetings should accommodate the requirement to have the staff in the production facility.' The respondent commented on having meetings with production staff that were scheduled to reduce their absence from production activities to a minimum. This meant that the operational activities should not be neglected while project work is being enacted.

'The practice is to work online after the pandemic. The ability to accommodate online and hybrid working is a requirement of managing such projects.' The different modes of working post pandemic are noted. The project leaders will need to be proficient in managing project staff both online and in person. Teams may, therefore, have co-located staff as well those collaborating virtually. Membership of these teams could also be flexible, depending on the specific tasks or different phases of the project (Blair and Pagano, 2020). Training in a virtual environment is also covered in the literature (Blair and Pagano, 2021c).

The requirement for the project to access appropriate technologies is mentioned. These are required for communications, including translation, knowledge retention and dissemination, collaboration via virtual teams, for instance. Training is important, as stated previously, as well as standards applied to the global teams. National variations should be accommodated, such as in respect of currency, language and culture, as these affect the technology being utilised. Specific technologies may be needed for the delivery of the global project objectives. These are addressed in Blair, Grant and Woodcock (2020), Blair, Morris and Pagano (2023) and Blair and Pagano (2023), covering technology life cycle, implementation and management.

4.5 Environment

The specific national characteristics are mentioned, 'It is important to understand the geographical restrictions, of time, legal framework and currency. The language used should be plain, non-technical for general communications.' The specific issues for a global project are thus detailed. Distance can affect supply chains, service delivery and communications, for example. Different legal systems can cause issues with the applicability of contracts (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2022 on contracts). Exchange rate variations can lead to profits being reduced, for instance.

The problem of misinterpretation was also mentioned. It is important to verify understanding by checking with the project personnel.

There should be an appraisal of the risks inherent in the project and its environment. This will be a considerable task, given the typical characteristics of global projects. A comprehensive assessment of the degree of risk, mitigation and contingency measures should be enacted, considering the potential gains from the project. This should be an ongoing process and form part of the project structure (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2021). A risk management system could, thus, be created to perform these functions and ensure business continuity across the global project.

The requirement to consider the environmental aspects of projects is stated. 'International projects will need to consider climate change in the future. Requirements will be more mandatory in respect of protecting the environment and adopting more sustainable practices. This may mean moving away from profit if there is a negative impact on the environment.' This suggests that companies will not only have to accommodate increased regulation in this sphere but may also choose options that do not maximise profit in favour of those that give greater emphasis to protecting the environment and promoting sustainability.

This represents a major shift in emphasis for organisations that are primarily focused on commercial activities. It is perhaps an indicator of a new rationale in this sector (Blair and Pagano, 2021b).

5 Discussion

The research was used to create a template for a strategy to manage global projects. This comprises the critical activities, derived from practice and the literature review. These can be utilised as a general guideline for practitioners (see Diagram 1 below), in order to assist with delivering the required outcomes from the project.

Diagram 1. Template for Creating a Strategy to Manage Global Projects

- a) Setup a knowledge system to capture and retain knowledge throughout the project. This may utilise several languages and translations. Encourage learning at all levels within the project organisation and partners. The system should validate the knowledge, be secure and permit dissemination to stakeholders at the different levels.
- b) Establish good communications, which should allow information to be filtered and delivered securely to the appropriate personnel. This information should be tailored to the stakeholders, in terms of both content and style. This system should include the supply chains for these projects. These should be accessed for information and innovation.
- c) Create a facility to translate information and verify understanding, to be incorporated into the communications system of the global project.
- d) Create a detailed project plan with tasks, timings and budgets to be utilised at the appropriate levels by the different work teams in the organisation.
- e) Develop and maintain a risk management system to record, assess and respond to risks across the global project. The risks should be identified and assigned personnel to manage them, as deemed appropriate.
- f) Develop an understanding of national characteristics and apply 'cultural sensitivity' to decisions and workplace discussions. Use training to achieve this objective.
- g) Manage both online and in-person team members. Collaboration should be encouraged in order to improve team cohesion and project outcomes.
- h) Install and maintain the required technologies, accommodating national variations.
- i) Adopt sustainable practices, prioritising these over profits, as appropriate.
- j) The project manager should be appointed from the main organisation, in order to retain control and ensure an appropriately qualified individual occupies this role.

This can also be considered in terms of the systems needed for these projects. The principal systems, indicated by this research, are shown (see Diagram 2 below), utilising a 'systems approach' to illustrate the transformation required to deliver a global project.

GLOBAL PROJECT ORGANISATION

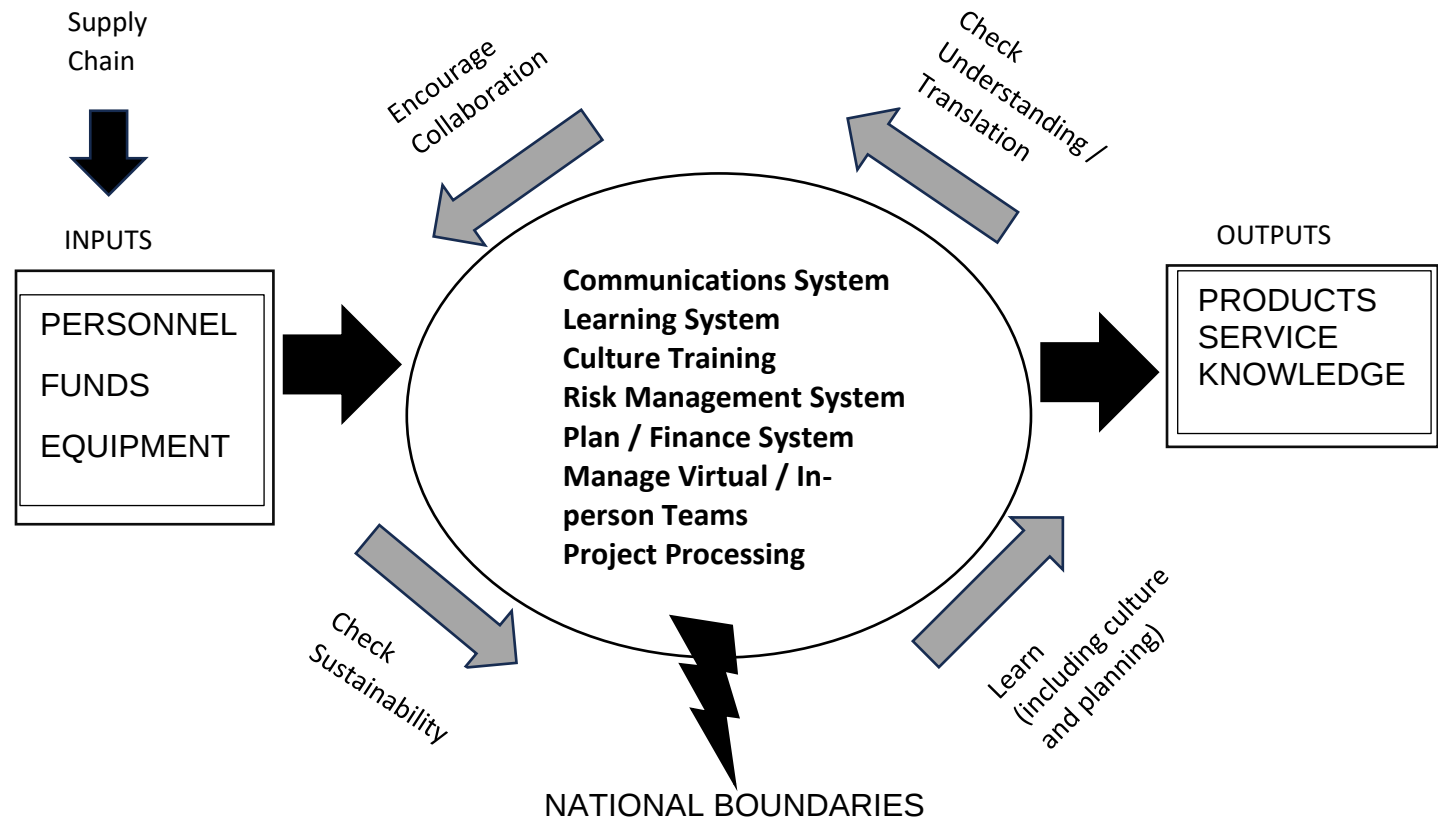


Diagram 2. Key Activities in a Global Project

The project manager, appointed from within the organisation, will setup and control the project systems, as necessary, employing the required technologies.

The principal activities in the project are considered. Collaboration between the project personnel should be encouraged. Checks should be made on understanding, considering the requisite translations. Learning should be promoted and applied to the project planning phases. Learning should also occur in respect of the different cultures present in the project. This needs to be utilised in the project decision-making processes. The sustainability of the project processes and outputs needs to be checked and adjustments made, as necessary. The actual project process must be considered, namely translating the inputs into the project objectives with one of the outputs being the learning derived from this process.

6 Conclusion

This research provides a contribution to the management of global projects, based on a literature review and an empirical study. Recommendations were made, regarding the strategy for managing this type of project. This work could be extended by considering projects in different sectors and different countries, as well as a range of practitioners at different levels in various organisations, involved in managing such projects.

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Dr Garry Blair
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CHAPTER 7 - Public Sector Projects

‘Serving the public in the post pandemic world’: A Study of Project Management in the Public Sector.

Dr Garry Blair, Stuart Barratt and Dr Rosane Pagano

ABSTRACT:

The public sector has been severely affected by the pandemic, resulting in major changes to operating conditions and expectations. The requirements for public sector projects have similarly changed, with the nature and scope of such enterprises being severely affected. The pandemic has led to excessive public expenditure on health matters and supporting the economy through the restrictions to activities.

This paper proposes that there has been a major change to project management in the public sector. Priorities have altered and the available resources have been drastically reduced. Current projects have been cancelled or reduced in scope and new projects have been commissioned for different priorities, shaped by the pandemic. The approach to project management has also been amended, due to the effects of the pandemic. This has led to generally higher levels of urgency, reduced budgets and shorter timescales for implementation.

Public sector projects are vital to the global economy, in terms of delivering services and stimulating private sector demand. This importance has been exacerbated by the pandemic, as nations utilise the public sector resources to address critical health issues, in respect of prevention, mitigation, care and cure. Public sector projects are, therefore, of vital importance and require further study to help to understand the prevailing operating conditions and demand. Research can also assist in comprehending the actions required of the project manager, in directing such enterprises.

This paper examines key literatures, discerning the major themes in this sphere. A model of learning is adapted to categorise these themes. An interview has been held with a senior manager from a UK public sector organisation, with a job remit spanning health, education and social services, and the main themes are also selected from the interview text. This enables the academic and practitioner perspectives to be considered.

A summary of implications for practice is presented, comprising a 'rich picture' of key areas to be addressed in respect of public sector projects, utilising the soft systems methodology techniques.

KEYWORDS: Public Sector; Public Sector Projects; Soft Systems Methodology; 'Triple-Loop' Learning; Stakeholders; Responsible Innovation; Value.

1 Introduction

The public sector can be defined the part of the economy that delivers services to the general public and is controlled, regulated or influenced by the state. A formal definition has been provided by Needle (2015:592) [1], namely the public sector is, “a broad area that includes central and local government, hospitals, universities, schools and nationalized industries.” This, therefore, includes national and regional or state government together with health and education organisations and also industries run by the state.

Service delivery can occur utilising several mechanisms. The latter can comprise public, private and charity sector organisations or a combination of these entities. The common objective is to deliver services to the public. The public sector is vital to the economies of most countries, in terms of stimulating demand, providing private sector business and social benefits.

The global pandemic has increased the importance of the public sector in most countries, due to the requirement to protect public health. Investment in public health has been an urgent demand of this period, leading to government regulation of behaviour and investment in health services, via public, private and charity organisations. The importance of public sector projects was thus heightened, in the effort to protect public health and stop health services from being overwhelmed. The strongly interventionist approach needed and period of global trauma has potentially changed the nature of the public sector and its projects for a world emerging from this crisis.

2 Methodology

A review of key literatures was performed and the principal themes extracted in an inductive analysis [2]. The 'triple-loop' model of project learning was then used to organise these themes [3]. The levels of knowledge, comprising project, process and organisation, were thus utilised to analyse these themes, which were extracted from literature that focussed on public sector projects. A further layer, that of 'society' was added, based on the findings of this research. The latter represents the highest level of learning, which enables and influences the organisation in respect of culture. The other layers and major groups of themes in the literature are: project; process; organisation. The learning associated with the 'project' level is focussed on meeting the prescribed targets. The 'process' level comprises the resourcing of the projects. The 'organisation' level constitutes the culture and includes the commissioning, cancellation and scope-setting of projects.

The premise is that experiential learning is enacted at each of these levels, which interact to affect the others, for example improving processes to assist in delivering project outcomes.

A semi-structured interview with a senior manager from the public sector was held, in order to glean a practitioner perspective. The manager was responsible for projects in education, health and social services. These included projects that were critical to service delivery. The main themes were then extracted from this research, in order to provide advice for practice and supplement the literature review. The themes were, thus, discerned from the literature and empirical study using an inductive approach. These were then categorised into the broad themes of the project learning model, as cited above.

The findings from this research were summarised in a 'rich picture' (after Checkland and Scholes [4]). This should provide an initial position for future research as well as key points for application to practice [5].

3 Literature Review

A review of the literature was enacted, considering key journals. The premise was that public sector projects need learning to occur at several levels, in order to be successful.

3.1 Society Level

The level of 'society' represents the highest strata of learning, with cultural changes here shaping the organisations, the nature of their projects and environment for success.

The concept of 'Grand Societal Challenges' is defined as complex problems, needing a concerted effort to solve [6]. The global pandemic provides an example of such a phenomenon, requiring contributions from both public and private sectors in order to attain solutions for the public health issues. The mix of outcomes for global sustainability objectives is highlighted, for instance the positive effects on the climate and pollution, with the restrictions on travel, and negative in terms of economic growth, hunger and poverty, as the economic consequences of measures to combat the virus became evident.

Initiatives to promote 'Responsible Innovation' are suggested as a means to address such societal challenges. These should be promoted internationally to maximise impact. Responsible Innovation can be encouraged via a framework for governance and evaluation of innovations, in respect of harmful consequences and positive contributions to such complex problems. These initiatives should encourage reflection on performance and reconfiguration, as needed. Reconciliation of differences should be via deliberation that includes the relevant parties, in order to establish solutions [7].

The phenomenon of an economic 'driving force' was discussed [8]. The need to consider shareholder value, by increasing share price, was viewed as being problematic. The premise that companies maximise social welfare by maximising share price is challenged, with obesity and pollution cited as two examples of the antisocial effects of pursuing corporate profit. The notion that public limited companies mean wider ownership of shares and, hence, more accountable

organisations is contradicted. The move to 'networking organisations', connecting customers and suppliers in 'asset light' companies, like Nike and Netflix, has reduced the need to raise capital via shares in a public limited company format. The concentration of company ownership, for example 5 companies are quoted as currently owning around 22% of the value of the US share index. The solution is proposed as using employees to drive change via social value, for example. This could extend to appointing worker-directors, perhaps encouraged by government, using 'bailouts' to apply leverage in this respect.

The institutional environment is examined [9]. The proposition is that informal institutions combine with formal institutions in order to formulate contractual rules and agreements. Informal institutions comprise cultural systems, including such entities as customs, norms and religion. Formal institutions are laws, including regulations and rights. These create the environment that forms the contract parameters, both formal and informal for projects. Negotiations will occur using this framework. The framework will evolve and adapt over time, via formal and informal measures that affect the rules and institutions. This creates the environment for projects in society, which varies depending on the local, national and international contexts.

The premise that social problems can all be solved by entrepreneurs is challenged by Chalmers [10]. The underlying belief that the state cannot solve social and economic problems is viewed as being flawed. There are said to be power issues with social entrepreneurs, as they, typically, dominate their market. This may lead to exclusion, in terms of proposed solutions. There is also an element of business risk present, so the potential for failure exists. This could have negative effects on the service users who benefit from this social entrepreneurship. The requirement to evaluate the situation is thus stated, in order to determine whether social entrepreneurship, public policy or a combination of both comprises the optimum approach.

3.2 Organisation Level

The organisation's culture determines project selection, resourcing and termination.

The structure in the organisation is viewed as a significant determinant of project success [11]. This should promote the performance of key activities to organise, resource and execute projects. The organisational strategy will determine project selection and prioritisation [12]. The formulation of a business case, required outcomes and benefit realisation scheme are vital activities in this area. The management of related projects in programmes and contracts are also an important aspect, with the establishment of governance procedures, accompanying resourcing and systems, which comprise a critical requirement of project performance. The creation of a suitable decision-making structure is, hence, needed in order to evaluate, select and execute projects, with the objective of delivering public service outcomes.

Organisational design and governance are viewed as being of primary importance in enabling project delivery [13]. The principal element is to understand the

organisation, in terms of demands and resources. The distribution of power, including degrees of autonomy and teamwork, needs to be considered and the decision structures implemented to facilitate operations. The time aspect should be accommodated with temporary projects and more permanent organisational structures given attention. The prevailing technology [14] must be embodied in this design, allowing the human and technical elements to be combined to deliver the service outcomes. The suggestion is that managers' perception is utilised, harnessing current thinking to define the organisational structures. The requirement is to comprehend the individual and group views in order to create these arrangements.

The use of hybrid contexts in projects is discussed [15], employing a study of UK private and public care homes. This is defined as the project having both social and economic outcomes. The rationale comes from governments imposing a private sector rationale on public sector organisations, in terms of commercial orientation (regarding budget-setting and income generation, for example) and using both private and not-for-profit organisations to deliver public service outcomes. The nature of the hybrid context was said to be determined by two factors: the amount of competition in the market; and type of control of the organisation (for example, public or private). It was stated that companies that had low contextual constraints, enabling organisational operations to proceed without restrictions or interference from outside the organisation, contributed to high organisational performance. Good management practices were defined as: target-setting; creating incentives; use of operations and monitoring; improved management of people. These were viewed as being key contributors to high performance.

The notion of business objectives embracing both social and economic objectives, thus creating projects with dual aims, was proposed by Battilana et al. [16]. The potential tension between these two objectives was also highlighted. This could be addressed by designing an appropriate organisational structure to reconcile these conflicts and promote successful delivery of outcomes. The importance of the leadership setting an example in terms of behaviour and the recruitment and training of personnel to deliver the required outcomes was stated. The need for the commitment of managers and staff to the dual organisational aims was emphasised.

The use of 'high-impact coalitions' was highlighted [17]. This literature proposed that the private sector should lead the response to societal issues. The result is the formation of coalitions between public and private organisations, in order to run projects to address these issues. The suggestion is that these are voluntarily collaborations that only last as long as the specific project. Members give time and resources by means and interests in an essentially altruistic endeavour. They can also enter and leave easily, thus reducing potential dissent. The structure to address the project is deemed to be emergent, shaped by the task and the relationships between participants.

Success for such coalitions is attributed to the exercise of 'moral leadership', as this collaboration is voluntary on the part of the private sector organisations. The need for participants to want to engage with the project, attracted by the desire to contribute to addressing the social issues, is stated. The participating organisations should

regulate their commitment, in order to maintain their normal work. The coalitions should, ideally, be inclusive and be focussed on developing solutions to the social issues. This scenario should encourage the practice of leadership, in order to reconcile any competing aims to concentrate collective efforts on creating solutions [17].

3.3 Process Level

The learning required at the level of organisational processes is to be considered. These processes should facilitate project resourcing and monitoring, in order to optimise the required outcomes.

The case of project issues with 'non-human' actors impacting negatively on outcomes is recounted [18]. The approach led by senior management failed, incurring costs and delays. The major project was the construction of a new terminal at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam. These delays were caused by a lack of knowledge of the site configuration underground. Those personnel possessing this knowledge were excluded from the decision-making process. The artefacts, or 'boundary objects' that could have assisted this process were not available to the project team and, hence, were ineffective. There was a deficit of proper documentation to assist this aspect of the project. The action of outsourcing the project management to an external party led to issues, due to lack of knowledge and collaboration, in respect of the project. The requirement for ongoing cooperation throughout the project, leveraging local knowledge, was discerned as the principal requirement. The importance of the project governance structure was, hence, emphasised, allowing the different personnel to communicate effectively. This would have ensured that the required knowledge of the 'non-human' agent, comprising the underground site, was shared with the relevant parties, thus permitting effective project decisions to be enacted.

A study of a large public sector infrastructure project in Holland emphasised the need for trust to facilitate governance and lead to successful outcomes [19]. Trust is defined here as the acceptance of uncertainty of arrangements, together with the sharing of norms and values for the project. One device that could be used was the exchange of equivalent resources, to be performed at the same time by parties involved in the project. Two types of trust are specified: 'calculative trust' is rationally based on a system, containing mechanisms, rules and penalties; 'normative trust' is based on personal relationships, influenced by parties' shared history. Attempts to define strict rules of project governance are criticised for trying to anticipate future events and, thus, embrace all of the possible alternative actions. This is viewed as being problematic, in the case of application to very large projects (termed 'Megaprojects'), due to issues of scale and complexity. It is, thus, very difficult to accommodate all operating conditions. Contract arrangements should, though, provide a framework for collaboration. A series of workshops were successfully used to develop trust, in the case of this project.

The use of an organisational change model to implement and embed projects was studied by Pollack and Pollack [20]. This employed action research to reflect on the utilisation of Kotter's eight-step change model to structure a knowledge-retention project in a large organisation. The issue to be addressed was an ageing workforce, so transference of tacit and explicit knowledge was required in order to sustain organisational performance over time. This research revealed that the change model was used in a linear mode, however the steps occurred over different timelines in different parts of the organisation. There were also different actions needed to make these individual steps successful in different sections of the company. The ultimate aim was to enact the change and then embed the resultant processes in the organisational culture. Reflection on this project showed a general level of success with the model, although the final step still required full completion after the research had been published. The complexity encountered in this large-scale study should assist in the research of large public sector projects, which are usually complicated entities.

3.4 Project Level

The knowledge at the project level is embodied in all of the techniques and tools required to successfully deliver the prescribed outcomes, within the stated parameters of time, budget and quality, for example.

The notion that projects drive performance and value creation in the economy is proposed [21]. This research cites pre-pandemic sources that state project activity will increase in value by over 65% in the ten years up to 2027 [21].

The suggestion is that leaders should have an appropriate mix of skills to manage projects and teams, including virtual teams [22] [23]. The requirement for project sponsors to create a safe working environment and suitable code of ethics is stated. A template has been formulated in order to assist the project management process. This is termed 'the project canvas' and comprises three elements to be defined via workshops: Foundation, containing the purpose, investment and potential benefits; People, itemising the sponsors, project staff and other stakeholders; Creation, detailing the deliverables, plan and required change, including risks and tactics. This template can be used to assist in comprehending the project by attempting to provide the required information to manage this enterprise.

The learning from complex projects is also summarised, for transference of knowledge in training project managers [24]. A sample of such projects were studied, focussing on leadership. The central role of communications, developing power sources to manage resistance and liaising with stakeholders, for instance in order to negotiate their definition of success, were emphasised. The use of 'best practice' was also suggested to resolve issues via judgement. This type of project is relevant to large public sector projects which tend to be complex, due to resourcing, stakeholder and governance issues.

Different levels of project value have been discerned, using research into a UK public infrastructure case [25]. This work identifies three levels: Local, providing a service and a stimulus to the local economy; Sector, optimising travel in urban areas

as well as enhancing sector value; User, improving the user experience. The premise is that public sector projects can, thus, have these three levels of value identified. This can be translated into a benefit realisation programme, in order to ensure that this potential value is delivered at each level.

The need to define a business case to encourage the process of value creation is suggested [26] in a study of an Information Systems project, located in the Danish public sector. This states that the benefits, costs and risks should be identified. Benefits should then be further evaluated to state the type of change with potential value and costs, including required personnel. The need for a social commitment is stated, utilising the organisational change agents. Dynamic adjustment should be enacted so that the project is aligned with the prevailing conditions and requirements. The business case is, therefore, used to aid value creation and should be revised to accommodate changes over the duration of the project. This should ensure that the project outcomes are still relevant to the demands of the sector.

A study of major public projects [27] examined key issues in selection and commissioning. The problem of cost and benefit analyses being ignored in favour of other criteria, such as politically-motivated reasons, was stated. The requirement was discerned as obtaining a clear definition of success, in terms of tactical and strategic measures. The need to examine different solutions and ensure planning has a long-term horizon with appropriate consideration of risk and realistic aims [28], rather than mainly short-term objectives, was stated. It was noted that public pressure for projects to be enacted carried no financial obligations for the lobbyists, other than their normal tax bills. The problem of cost estimates being significantly under the final figure was highlighted. The tendency for management to focus on the beginning of the project was noted, with final outcomes being regarded as of secondary importance.

4 Findings

A senior manager in the public sector was interviewed and the main themes from the responses were discerned from the text. The parallels with the key literatures were then examined. The findings from this empirical work also, potentially, constitute useful information for practitioners, in respect of such projects.

4.1 The Pace of Change has Accelerated

The change in circumstances was reflected, as the '**pandemic has accelerated the change model and move to virtual working**'. The respondent noted that the '**pace of change has increased – you are expected to deliver outcomes in 90 days that previously took 6 months.**' This was primarily due to the urgency of delivering public sector services. The accompanying trend towards virtual working came as the government imposed restrictions on movement in order to limit the spread of the virus and, hence, attempt to reduce pressure on health services. The movement towards using web communications for many professional activities was, therefore, reinforced.

The need to address urgent societal challenges is discussed [6], with different approaches suggested [7] [8] [10], for example.

4.2 The Requirements for Projects have changed

A new order for projects was acknowledged, as the respondent noted that **'the world changes - what was right yesterday needs to change tomorrow'**. The public sector environment required urgent change to accommodate the demands of the pandemic. The post-pandemic era has also demanded rapid change, including innovative solutions to accommodate blended working, both virtual and co-located, and financial constraints, due to the high expenditure in the pandemic.

These themes are reflected in the literature [22] [12], looking at the post-pandemic project environment.

4.3 A Structure to Implement Change is Important

The respondent stressed the importance of having a structure to guide change. The perspective was that **'Kotter's change model is my life'**. This was seen as being part of his working routine, which was the driving of the change agenda in public service, using Kotter's eight step model as a delivery vehicle. The requirement for this 'management-led' structured approach to change, initiated on a daily basis, was stated.

The application of a suitable change model was analysed by Pollack and Pollack [20].

4.4 The Workforce need to be Comfortable in a Virtual Environment

A principal requirement was stated as a need for **'autonomous thinkers, to be comfortable in a virtual work environment.'** The requirement to work virtually changes the recruitment specification to emphasise new criteria. The candidates now need to be motivated to work alone or as part of virtual teams. The removal of the support networks provided by co-located teams means that workers need to be more independent and have the requisite skills and motivation to work online.

This team and virtual team aspect is cited by several sources [22] [23].

4.5 There will be a Shortage of Personnel with the required Skills

This situation was defined as the **'problem in future is the paucity of experts in change'**. The requirement is for managers to implement projects to deliver the required changes in the public sector. The demand for good project managers is high and the private sector can provide more lucrative contracts for these personnel. The need to find alternative methods to hiring these personnel was thus indicated.

The respondent suggested that **'it is necessary to develop your own staff'**. The aim was to select suitable personnel from the current public sector workforce and develop them into project managers in the organisation. This means that the staff will

be 'hybrid' in that they will be professionals in their subject area as well as project managers. This has the potential advantage of these managers possessing a good understanding of the context for the projects as well as, possibly, a heightened sense of loyalty to the organisation. The training for these project managers can be tailored to the organisational needs, thus fulfilling prescribed aims.

The learning from leading complex projects is identified for staff development by Floris and Cuganesan [24].

4.6 The Priority is the Right 'Value Set' for Personnel

The respondents emphasised the importance of the candidates' values, in respect of the recruitment process for the organisational 'change agents'. **'Value set is the priority - do the candidates care about the stakeholders?'** was seen as the key criteria. The interviews and tests were thus designed to obtain this information. The candidates' responses were required to **'put the stakeholders at the centre'** of their responses, rather than emphasise more functional answers, based on recommended project management practice.

The importance of defining success [27] and leveraging stakeholder knowledge [18] [24] are also emphasised in the literature.

4.7 A Mix of Skills are Required

The need for project managers and team members to possess a **'mix of soft and hard skills'** was noted. The ability to manage themselves and their professional relationships as well as possessing technical skills in project management and their area of expertise, such as health, education and social services, was viewed as being essential. Training will be needed to develop the organisation's staff to the requisite standards. This blend of skills should facilitate problem-solving and performance of routine tasks to deliver the necessary change in the public sector.

This requirement is also considered to be an essential element of project leadership and execution by Nieto-Rodriguez [21].

5 Discussion

Soft Systems Methodology was used to create a 'rich picture', summarising the principal themes of the research [4], illustrated in Figure 1. The levels of learning are represented, namely society; organisation; process; project.

The key factors constitute the individual and collective areas of learning that this research has identified as critical to successfully implementing public sector projects. This summarises the findings of the research and, potentially, provides a useful position to initiate further work. The knowledge gathered may also assist

practitioners in implementing projects in a public sector environment and beyond this sphere.

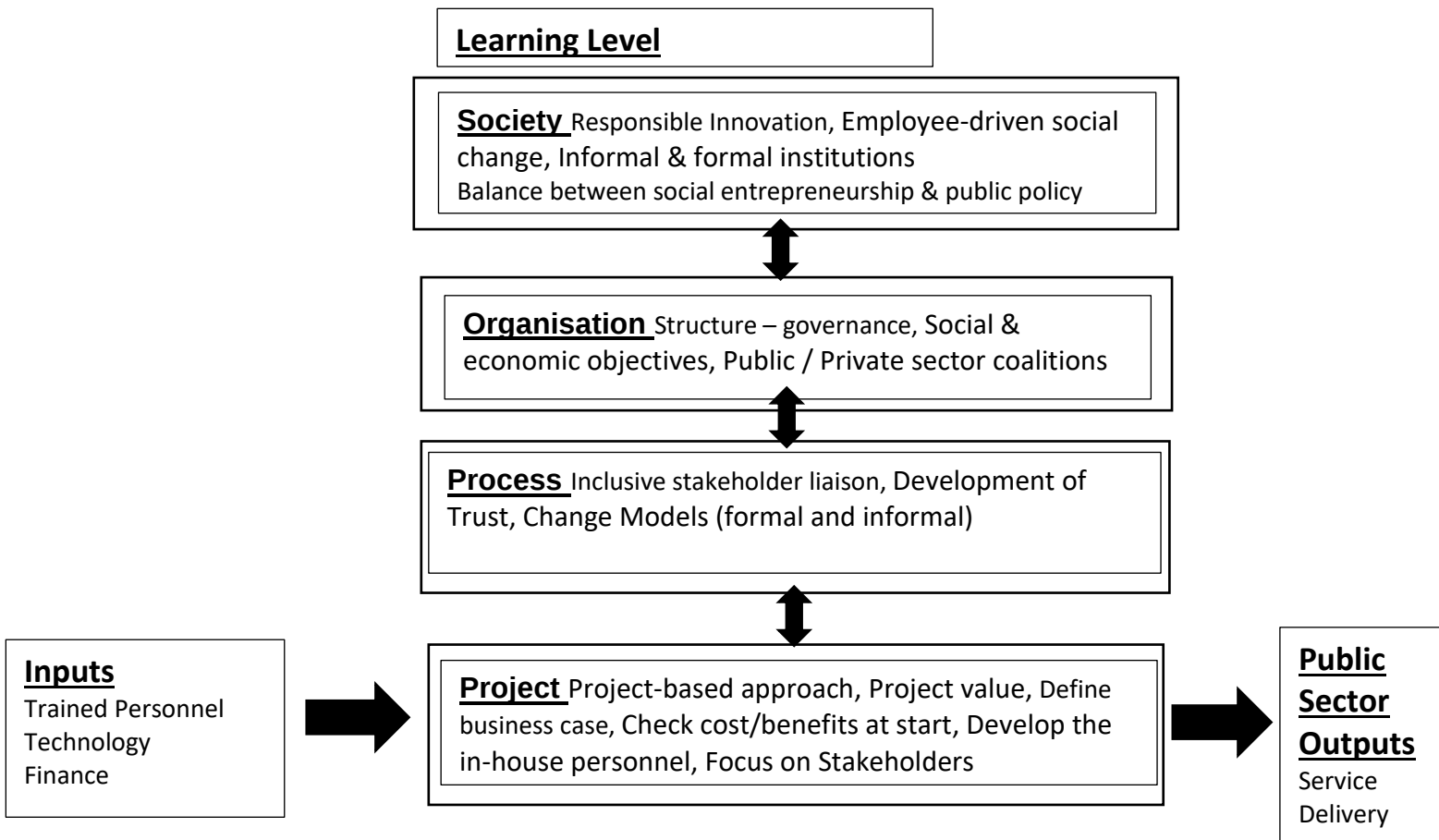


Figure 1. Key Factors for Implementing Public Sector Projects

6 Conclusion

This exploratory research has provided an insight into public sector projects. The objective is to increase understanding in the vital area of public project management. This work could be extended by further empirical research into other public sector organisations, accessing a range of respondents in various service sectors.

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Dr Garry Blair
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CHAPTER 8 - Agile Marketing Projects

Delivering Agile Marketing Projects: A View from Practice.

**Dr Garry Blair, Dr Peter Betts, Prof Tony Conway,
Dr Margaret Hyde and Dr Rosane Pagano**

ABSTRACT:

Successful marketing projects are vital to most organisations to ensure their survival. Companies and brands need to be promoted via marketing campaigns, in order to survive and prosper. Marketing project failures will lead to organisational decline and even termination, in severe cases. Marketing projects can help customers to fulfil genuine needs. This paper addresses the topic of creating successful marketing projects, utilising an 'agile approach'.

The importance of clearly defined objectives is stated. Internal efficiency is needed within the organisation, including resolution of power issues, to ensure the resource allocation and focus are on the marketing project. Definition of the brand and consideration of the customer base, including identifying profiles to permit a differentiated, segmented approach, are considered. The gathering of data for analysis and leveraging technology to facilitate these projects are recommended. This will comprise an 'agile approach' to marketing projects.

A survey of the key themes in the literature was utilised. A group interview, with several UK-based, experienced marketing professionals, was enacted in a semi-structured format. The data was then subject to inductive analysis, extracting the principal themes. A framework for delivering 'Agile marketing projects' is proposed, based on this research, using a project management 'learning' model.

KEYWORDS: Marketing Project; Agile Approach; SMART Objectives; Brand Definition; Customer Focus; Market Segmentation; Leveraging Technology.

1 Introduction

Successful marketing projects are critical to the survival of many public, private and charitable organisations, in respect of communicating effectively with their customers and users. Failure to achieve the requisite levels of demand from the target audience may cause closure, reduction or termination of operations. These projects may also provide potential customers with the option of gaining superior products and services, thus generating benefits for these stakeholders.

This paper investigates the principal aspects required to make marketing projects successful, via UK-based research.

The main definitions can be considered.

'Agile' is 'being able to deal with new situations quickly and successfully'.

'Marketing' is 'the business activity that involves finding out what customers want, using that information to design products and services, and selling them effectively'.

'Project' is 'a piece of planned work or an activity that is finished over a period of time and intended to achieve a particular purpose' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).

Projects designed to deliver marketing objectives should be agile, that is flexible in their approach, in order to optimise their use of resources and opportunities in their environments.

1.1 Problem Statement

There is a need for marketing projects to attain a level of success that generates enough demand to sustain the organisation, in respect of its products and services. One research source states that many companies are ineffectively spending 40 to 60% of their digital marketing budgets, for instance (Magoc, 2023).

This suggests that improved techniques are needed to create successful marketing projects.

1.2 Research Objective

The principal aim of the research was to obtain recommendations from practitioners to assist in delivering successful outcomes for marketing projects. A framework for delivering 'agile marketing projects' was then constructed. This summarises the learning from the literature and empirical work.

2 Methodology

This research was conducted using qualitative methods to gather the data and a 'grounded approach', in order to analyse the results and present the conclusions.

A review of several of the principal journals was enacted and several articles on the topic of marketing projects were selected and reviewed. The key themes were noted from this literature, using inductive methods. An empirical study was undertaken, comprising an interview with several marketing professionals, who also taught this topic. This was conducted utilising semi-structured questions, in order to allow the respondents more discretion in their responses. The central point of the questioning was to consider the properties of successful marketing projects. The interview notes were then analysed in order to extract the key themes. These were gathered using an inductive approach, without a predetermined coding scheme. This data was then organised into a hierarchy of themes, in parallel with the literature (Blair and Pagano, 2021a and Easterby-Smith et al, 1991), using a project management 'learning' format to categorise the results (McClory et al, 2017). A framework for delivering 'agile marketing projects' was then constructed, from the results of this study, in order to assist practitioners and summarise the learning from the research (as per Blair, Pagano and Burns, 2019).

3 Literature Review

Several key journals were utilised for a search on the topic of marketing projects and related areas. The important themes were extracted via a review of the selected articles, using inductive techniques. These were then organised into themes.

3.1 Organisation

One article considers the building of a brand using advertised promises to the customer (Martin et al, 2024). This is viewed as a highly effective way to attract and retain customers with a specific commitment, provided it is fulfilled. These authors use an advertising database to construct their argument. Their conclusion was that the most effective advertising was based on verifiable promises to the customer. The nature of the commitment by the organisation will determine the potential target audience for the product or service. An example was given of a car hire company promising that customers would be given the car that they requested, rather than the next available vehicle, thus appealing to drivers who wanted to drive superior or specific cars. The promise should, ideally, set a quantifiable target which is measurable by the customer. This article determined that the organisations using this type of advertising declared better performance statistics, in respect of customer response metrics. The customer promise should define the target group, the nature of the transaction and the customer reward for supporting the brand. It should comprise the organisation's strategy and align both internal and external stakeholders in respect of effort, expectations and resourcing. The ideal is to be the default brand for purchase, so that competitors' products are not even considered, irrespective of their customer arguments.

An article by Stengel et al. (2023) considers the performance of brands and proposes metrics to assist organisations to improve brand performance. The perceived tension between performance measurement and brand-building activities is addressed. This is envisaged as focusing on short-term performance enhancement or long-term brand value, with the emphasis on one of these occurring at the expense of the other. The authors refute this premise and state that the two objectives are compatible, provided the correct perspective is assumed and suitable indicators are determined, in order to assist in achieving both aims. Examples from three different companies are used to illustrate this statement in practice. The suggested key performance indicator comprises four factors that comprise the customer's view of the brand, namely: familiarity with the brand; respect for the brand; relevance of the brand to the customer's life; unique aspects of the brand. Surveying a selected sample of customers and potential customers in a targeted area will allow this indicator to be constructed.

These should provide suitable metrics for the development of brand value and also enhance short term performance of the organisations. The importance of addressing specific areas was stressed. The location and type of customer to be targeted requires attention in order for the brand strategy to be effective. Examples of target groups were provided, such as: loyal customers; those prepared to switch to competitors' products and services; potential new customers; former customers who could potentially switch back to the company's products and services. The

demographic groups are also important, for instance, if the product has a customer base comprising young males then attempts to make the brand appeal to families or an older generation may lead to the core group being alienated. The location is also relevant to brand strategies, in order to concentrate resources on key areas.

The holistic view also should be considered, in respect of the potential effects on demand for products and services. An increase in traffic on the website, for example, may not generate the expected gains if this is the result of an intensive marketing campaign that alienates regular customers, due to excessive communications. The increase in a key performance indicator here may actually lead to a reduction in demand. This article, therefore, proposes that a nuanced approach to brand development is required, considering the full context and using the suggested indicator. This could then be linked to revenue in order to demonstrate the success of these initiatives, developing brands for improved performance as well as long-term benefits.

A 'hybrid' business venture, applying an entrepreneurial approach to a new product or service, from within a large company, is considered by Furr and O'Keeffe (2023). The authors state that such enterprises have generally been successful, citing examples from practice. The objective is to apply entrepreneurial skills to creating a product or service, in an agile manner, while being supported by corporate resources. The properties of a new 'start up' business, namely flexibility and dedicated, risk-taking management, could be combined with the strength and security of a corporation. This was viewed as being feasible only if the entrepreneurial division was separated from the corporation and allowed to exercise its own discretion, without being constrained by corporate rules and procedures. This would, it was suggested, permit innovation via flexibility without the need for compliance to hamper the initiative. The entrepreneur could be recruited from outside the company, in order to ensure that the requisite qualities are present. The benefits of both types of enterprise could then be obtained, in order to create and exploit new business initiatives. These should be identified as business needs that are not currently being fulfilled. An example was the American car repair market, where a 'hybrid' initiative created a disruptive business that achieved success in a fragmented context. The latter allowed this entrepreneurial initiative to be viable, as customer demand was not being satisfied, for example in respect of on-site repairs. The 'start up' division's initial success could then be scaled into a larger commercial initiative, using the corporation's resources, especially finance and marketing. The ultimate aim is to provide a new value proposition for customers and rapidly exploit it then scale this provision to satisfy the market demand. This also encourages a knowledge exchange between the 'start up' and corporate businesses. This will allow the brand to be established and exploited, thus maximising the returns at the corporate level.

An article by Ghazimatin et al. (2021) uses an empirical study to examine temporary organisations in marketing and their challenges in operation, especially the governance aspects. The study is located in the United States 'business to business' construction sector. The temporary organisations comprised the contractors working on each project and these were hybrid in that they had connections to each other through prior work projects, so trusted suppliers were used for new projects

comprising a network in the sector. The research examines firms chosen on the basis of price, using fixed price or variable (costs plus an agreed amount), and supplier firm selection by ability. The former tended to be regulated by a formal contract and the latter via longer term connection, developing trust between the parties. The relationship can be determined by the size of the project, duration of the contract and the quality and amount of previous collaborations between the main parties. This research stated that projects involving suppliers chosen according to their ability, had superior results in terms of delivery than those where price was used as the selection criterion. One key aspect was that alignment of the organisations was critical in that the cultures, values and objectives should match, aligning the two types of selection. This supersedes the latter criteria, if the organisations are so aligned. The selection process, also, forms part of the relationship-building process and contributes to motivating the suppliers. Selection on ability was viewed as assisting in coordination, thus saving time in communications between organisations. The utilisation of variable pricing was said to cause more time to be spent on coordination between the companies. The ultimate objective was to stop project costs exceeding the budget figure. Successful governance of these projects can contribute greatly to their ultimate success and this article addresses the requisite factors. The temporary combination of a number of suppliers to achieve marketing objectives, comprising a network of organisations, selected on abilities or via price and bound by social ties or contracts, is essential for successful delivery of the prescribed outcomes.

The emergence of new stakeholders to potentially disrupt the marketing environment is considered by Moorman et al.(2024). The area is the health care sector, with marketing occurring 'direct to the consumer' and 'business to business'. The traditional stakeholders of: pharmacies and drug companies; hospitals and medical centres; have now been supplemented with additional parties in this sphere. Problems with traditional routes to health care, including lack of access to doctors (increasingly via online or via telephone), long waiting lists for treatment and lack of resources for medical centres have increased the trend to seek alternatives. This trend has been strengthened by the covid pandemic, with many countries' health systems struggling to recover after this severe disruption.

Online platforms and communities are present in this sector. These can provide valuable support for health care users. The communities are usually started in order to share experience on a common theme, such as individuals undergoing specific treatments. These may also include the role of supporting the families and friends of these individuals. Platforms can be setup to promote specific products and this involves direct marketing of these to consumers.

The presence of online advice sources has led to many individuals attempting self-diagnosis. Commercial services are available to obtain a diagnosis of potential health problems. 'Wearable' health monitoring technology is readily available. Many health products can also be purchased online. The use of online 'influencers' can help to market products and this could be voluntarily or paid advocacy. This can lead to quality issues and treatment problems, as inappropriate products are purchased and administered.

Alternative medicine has also increased in importance and is promoted as a healthy option, rather than traditional forms. These treatments could be more closely aligned with traditional forms, so that information is shared, to assist diagnosis and care.

The disparity between the rich and poor is more marked here, with expensive private health care only being available to the wealthiest groups. The use of cheaper alternatives, such as self-diagnosis and purchase of online treatments, will probably increase in the poorer groups.

Customer feedback is increasingly gathered and made available, usually in sample or aggregate form. This can be used to assess providers and products, as well as be used to influence funding decisions. This can lead to excess demand on some resources, thus resulting in poorer access to treatment and increasing the trend to access alternative sources of health care.

The need for data to be gathered and analysed in the health care sector is paramount. This should be kept securely and used ethically. This can potentially be used for marketing, in order to target the communication of products and services to the appropriate audience.

The availability of public health services, as well as a private sector provision, is mentioned. This was viewed as generally enhancing the health of the population, in providing a publicly available standard of care, irrespective of income.

Marketing has the potential to help increase choice for consumers and gather data to promote changes to improve the provision of this vital service, according to this article. These new stakeholders can receive separate target marketing, according to their consumer profiles.

3.2 Process

Whitler (2022) examines the area of learning from marketing methods utilised in China, using examples from this country. The speed of delivery is noted, with China's typical marketing campaigns being conceived and executed rapidly, in comparison with the 'traditional' approach, comprising more lengthy preparation. The focus is usually on delivery to mobile devices, as smartphone ownership is high with long average daily use times in the Chinese population. The aim is to 'go viral' with the advertising being read by large numbers of potential customers. This contrasts with the traditional approach of considering many different advertising channels, such as television, radio, posters and newspapers. The technique in China is to rely heavily on 'influencers' to promote the products and services. The latter are said to have a much greater effect than in western campaigns. The aims are also viewed as being different, with campaigns in China focusing on revenue generation and increasing market share, so a 'long term' perspective, rather than a profit-centric view. The campaigns are thus conceived and developed rapidly, with the objective of quick, general distribution of the promotional material. The monopoly of several large companies, present in China, permits information on consumers to be gathered, so cooperation between the big companies can provide an accurate profile of the customer and highlight areas of potential demand. This allows a more nuanced

approach to marketing, where offers are tailored to consumer preferences, thus allowing more effective promotion of products and services to occur. This, therefore, means that campaigns can span different platforms, to cover different consumer areas, such as fashion, food and gaming. The Chinese method comprises a more agile approach to marketing than traditional methods and can, thus, provide potential learning in this sphere.

3.3 Project

An article addresses the construction of a marketing AI strategy. AI is 'artificial intelligence' that is 'a particular computer system or machine that has some of the qualities that the human brain has' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). The authors (Davenport et al., 2021) discuss the formulation of a marketing strategy that utilises AI Software. They suggest that the marketing discipline provides a good area for the development of applications that use AI. The notion is that organisations use two criteria to categorise the applications, namely: level of complexity is stand-alone or integrated; intelligence level is task automation or machine-learning. Examples are: a customer service chatbot; a stand-alone application for selection of paint colour; an enhanced customer relations service; an integrated facility to offer customers potential film purchases, based on past choices.

Organisations with little experience in this area should, it is suggested, progress in stages from simple uses to more complex, in order to develop their capacity to accommodate these enhancements. Initial uses could, thus, include stand-alone applications that advise staff on assisting customers. These are much lower risk than applications used directly by the customer, possibly embedded in other processes such as purchase of goods and services. The facility to promote products on the basis of past history then take payment for them is a sophisticated marketing mechanism.

There is a need to acquire the data for AI decision-making and this means there is an ethical aspect to consider, in respect of security and use of customers' personal information. Organisations should address this aspect by formulating a policy. The automation of routine decision-making via AI applications is regarded as a positive trend, with critical decisions being taken by humans, for example in terms of strategy. The practice of marketing can be significantly extended and enhanced by AI developments and the optimum usage needs to be determined by the organisations and their target market.

The potential new rationale for marketing caused by artificial intelligence (AI) in the next generation of smart assistants (such as 'Alexa' by Amazon) is considered by Dawar and Bendle (2022). This article suggests that customers will be more dependent on these devices to assist their purchasing decisions. This will require a paradigm shift in marketing techniques in order to affect the AI based decisions. Traditional brand management and promotion to encourage customer loyalty may have to be refocused. The marketing campaigns will need to influence the next generation of smart assistants to ensure that purchasing decisions consider and select the promoted products and services, as these may be delegated wholly or partly to these devices. The concept of customer loyalty to a brand will have to

change and accommodate influencing the smart machines to ensure the products and services are selected by these AI programmes. These interventions should be explicit, so that the customer is aware when products are being promoted by companies, for example by paying for product placement in terms of the purchasing decision on the smart assistant. The criteria for selection by the software could be made explicit, in order to understand this decision and ensure products are placed in order to maximise their chances of success. This changes the basis of marketing from traditional mechanisms via channels, such as TV, radio and online, to concentrate on the manufacturers of the smart assistants and the criteria for decision-making, together with any control parameters to be set by the customer. The default purchases made by customers who keep buying a product because they do not have time to check if it still meets the original selection criteria, such as price and quality, may be disrupted. Smart assistants could compare prices and quality criteria, for example, in respect of a number of competing products. This means that this form of 'brand inertia' may be disrupted and a new context accommodated. This may further shift marketing into a more technology-focused approach.

Fantini and Narayandas (2023) examine the use of analytics for marketing, illustrating their rationale with examples from practice. Three types of scenarios for decision-making in this area are outlined, based on the type of decisions and availability of appropriate data, namely: descriptive; predictive; prescriptive. These vary by the degree of human autonomy in the decisions and use of automation. Decisions that require future scenario descriptions, such as strategic marketing, are said to be best made by humans, as there may be insufficient data to provide automated solutions, for example in terms of future scenarios. Humans can, therefore, use expertise to accommodate ambiguity. Decisions with some data and a variety of potential scenarios, such as demand planning, can have several different solutions generated and the manager can decide which of these to implement. The final category is totally automated decisions, occurring because the context is rich in data and the type of decision requires such analysis, such as inventory management, so the solutions are prescribed and applied automatically, without human intervention. Machines are, thus, superior in terms of calculation and deduction.

Managers are required to frame the appropriate questions, rather than be 'the source of all knowledge' in respect of marketing decisions, according to this article. An example of stock control is given, showing the progression of inventory management from descriptive to prescriptive techniques, in order to improve the quality of decisions regarding sale of excess stock, using price and sales criteria. The control of the inventory benefitted from greater investment in gathering and processing the data and more automated decision-making. The tension between data analysts, whose objective is to acquire improved quality of data, and business analysts, whose focus is on generating income and profits, is noted. Relying on machine-generated solutions in uncertain environments can lead to costs, in terms of failed business initiatives and missed opportunities. The importance of matching the appropriate form of decision-making to the scenario is, therefore, emphasised by these authors.

The use of digital platforms for marketing brands is addressed by Wichmann et al. (2022). These are said to comprise two principal types: platforms where multiple

brands and suppliers reside in a digital 'marketplace' (such as Amazon); dedicated platforms to exclusively promote one brand (such as Nike). The problem of loss of control by the brand owners, in respect of the first instance, is possibly addressed by the latter with the exclusive arrangements.

The 'marketplace' platform may lead to competition on a narrow range of criteria, such as price and promotional offers, in a situation where multiple brands are present and multiple suppliers may be offering the same branded products at different prices. The focus is on the transaction and the control is with the platform provider and customer. Marketing is limited here as competition is principally based on price, for instance. Customers may still be attracted to brands but may have choices of the same brand, offered by different suppliers at various prices and with various promotional offers. The customers will tend to use these 'marketplace' platforms when they require a product or service and return only when they require another instance of the same product or service, with the example of purchases of trainers being given. The suppliers and the brands have minimal control in this environment.

The dedicated platform may have developed in order to counter this lack of control, in order to give the brand and supplier primacy. This is setup by the brand in order to exclusively promote their products and services. The aim could be to create and develop a community of customers and provide a brand 'ecosystem' to attract and retain customers. Complementary products, services and activities are offered, in order to encourage participation. The example given is a running club, where a brand of trainers is promoted, and customers are engaged on a long-term basis. The latter may also contribute to the platform, with comments and questions. Other suppliers may also contribute with complementary products and services, such as health monitoring, sports clothing and nutrition. Users could also contribute their stories, run times and fitness advice, for example. This should foster brand loyalty and permit a high level of product differentiation. The brand should be in a powerful position here, although the problem of other parties potentially causing issues was highlighted, if they are allowed to contribute to the platform activities. Negative comments and disagreements between these parties are examples of such potential occurrences. The dedicated platform, though, can provide a strong marketing position for brands, according to these authors.

An article by Chandrasekaran et al.(2022) considers the impact of technological change on markets, using statistical data. These authors examine the effects of disruptive technologies, in respect of products, customers and suppliers. The rate of conversion to the new technology can be slow, so that this exists as well as the former technology. This reduces the impact of the disruption on the supplier of the older technology, as there is no rapid fall in sales. An example provided was the move to mobile smartphones with a large number of older customers purchasing these devices and retaining their landlines, namely the former technology. The opposite trend occurred with music CDs and the potentially disruptive innovation of digital music downloads. The latter was viewed as the preserve of younger customers and so the CD market was expected to continue with substantial sales. This did not occur and the innovation quickly captured the market, causing a steep decline in CD sales, it was stated. These trends, therefore, affect sales and market

shares of new and old products. The example of the electric car was also given, with Tesla becoming the car manufacturer with the highest valuation and other companies, who preferred to invest in hybrid cars, falling behind due to increased focus on the environment.

The authors suggest that there are several discrete groups of customers, who can be profiled based on their behaviour with the new technology and attitude towards the potential change. They comprise: 'leapfroppers' adopt the new technology but did not want the old technology; 'switchers' have already adopted the old technology then decide to switch to the new technology product; 'dual users', who purchase the new technology and decide to keep the old technology as well; 'opportunists' would have had the old technology but delayed this purchase and adopt the new technology instead.

The growth of the total market, in respect of sales to new customers, is represented by the sum of the sales to the 'leapfroppers' and the 'opportunists'. The impact of the disruption caused by the new technology is determined by the size of the 'dual users' group and the duration that they keep both new and old technologies, together with the size of the 'switchers' group and the speed they switch technologies. The combined effects will comprise the total demand for the existing technology, considering the new, potentially disruptive technology in the market.

These groups can be targeted with tailored marketing campaigns, to address the particular customer profile and segment of the market. The company policies on these products can be determined by the leaders' views of the trends regarding potentially disruptive technologies. The outcomes will affect investment, production priorities, stocks and, ultimately, revenues and market shares, for example.

The use of new technologies in marketing is considered by Hoffman et al. (2022) in their article. The influence of technology is noted in respect of creating new products and improved mechanisms, including strategies, for marketing, better communications with customers, improved data with data analysis for decision-making and superior tools for managing marketing projects, for example. The potential contribution of academia in encouraging and developing the trends in technology is noted, together with the accompanying theory to help to comprehend and develop this sphere. Several areas are cited as examples of areas of development and further investigation. The use of digital platforms, artificial intelligence, technology transfer techniques and dashboards in marketing, for instance, comprise such areas of innovation.

The importance of flexibility in this nascent research is stressed. The need to liaise with practitioners using an agile perspective and being adaptable in the use of research methods, to provide appropriate means of investigation, is mentioned, perhaps utilising a mix of research methods.

4 Findings

Three marketing experts with both practice and academic experience were interviewed. This was a group interview, comprising semi-structured questions. The key theme of these questions was 'what makes a successful marketing project?' The main themes were then extracted from the interview and linked to the appropriate literature, in order to provide further analysis.

4.1 Organisation

A respondent stated, 'Internal politics needs to be understood and the culture should be onside in order to launch a new product.' The importance of aligning all of the internal resources, especially staff, in order to effectively implement the marketing project, is highlighted. Power issues within the organisation could jeopardise success, especially rival priorities and opposition to the project. The culture should be positive and supportive, in terms of the project objectives. It is important to manage the risks in respect of this environment (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2021).

'There should be a strong customer-focus. Power issues may cause problems with this, for example if the IT department determine the budgets. Homeworking could also lead to poor customer service.' The need to maintain focus on the customer is stated. There is a recognition that this could be weakened by 'office politics' and working practices within the organisation. The determination of budgets by other departments could lead to conflicting priorities, as the IT department focuses on systems rather than allocating sufficient funds for marketing and customer support. Homeworking may lead to a poorer customer service, perhaps in respect of standards, together with quality and speed of response. The hybrid office configuration needs to be considered (and the virtual working aspect is discussed in: Blair and Pagano, 2020; with training for virtual teams in Blair and Pagano, 2021c).

An interviewee stated, 'Check demand and determine who are the target customers. Verify their requirements. They may require a different product per segment of the market. Also there may be more customer expectations regarding sustainability and CSR.' This stresses the importance of recognising customers and potential customers and determining their needs. These may be separated into groups that can be targeted with different or amended products. The changing nature of expectations is noted, with customers demanding more sustainable products and wanting organisations to adhere to socially responsible practices (and have Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR. Sustainability issues are considered in Blair and Pagano, 2021b). Failure to do so could lead to customers transferring their business to other companies.

A respondent said, 'You need to create a persona, comprising a customer type. There should be one of these per profile'. This is a preliminary to putting the market into segments for specific target marketing. The profile will comprise the key characteristics of the customer group and should assist marketing with specific offerings for that group (Chandrasekaran et al, 2022).

'It is important to build relationships with customers. This could be via online communications or in-person. It is vital to resource this properly.' This indicates that obtaining sales is not enough. Relationships with customers should be paramount, encouraging loyalty to the company's products and services. Technological tools can be used to aid communications with the customer, via online features, such as chatbots. Different aspects of technological change are considered by, Blair, Grant and Woodcock (2020), Blair, Morris and Pagano (2023) and Blair and Pagano (2023).

The principle of progressing after the pandemic was contained in the statement, 'Never use the pandemic as an excuse.' Organisations should, thus, seek to make progress after this period and not blame any failings on the restrictions of the period of covid. Leadership in the post pandemic environment is considered by Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2021).

4.2 Process

The marketing of new products and services and definition of the customers is mentioned. A respondent stated, 'A new brand should be defined and the appropriate customers targeted. Differentiation should occur for the market segments, as required.' The requirement to define the market image and customers is noted. The latter should be separated into discrete groups, in order to target them more accurately, in terms of offers and advertising. This should lead to improved results, in respect of sales. The use of global resources and acquisition of customers may occur, depending on the scope of the project. (The management of such global projects is studied in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2023b.)

The requirement for internal efficiency is mentioned by a respondent, who suggested, 'Organisations must avoid creating 'virtual silos', for example, using a ticketing system for queries.' The problem indicated here is that departments and teams can fail to communicate, as queries are recorded with an email that cites a 'query number ticket' and there is no dialogue on the matter. These systems could also be used for customer queries and enquiries, potentially alienating the customers with impersonal replies and lack ownership of their item. The need to develop the requisite skills in staff is noted (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2023a).

One respondent said, 'Outputs can be measured but outcomes are harder to specify. Quality should be defined in order to understand this aspect of the product or service.' Output can be measured as quantities but this does not account for the quality of the products and marketing aspects. It is essential to comprehend quality and decide how this will be assessed, in order to gather feedback for the project. An improvement process can then be formulated, as required, then delivered utilising the change management models (Blair, Barratt and Pagano, 2022).

4.3 Project

One respondent stated, 'It is important to have clear, SMART objectives and understand the current issues.' The objectives of the marketing project should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART). These should,

therefore, be clearly defined and quantifiable, thus capable of being measured, in the current environment.

The data requirements of the project should be addressed and a clear view of the function obtained, as stated by a respondent, 'Ensure access to internal information and audit the marketing and sales areas, in order to get the required understanding.' The data could enable technology to be applied to the project, in terms of analytics informing process improvements. This will probably involve outsourcing some of the activities to trusted partners (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2022).

The need for focused enquiry was stated, as 'managers need to ask questions in order to understand why their organisation got the specific results.' It is important to analyse both success and failure. This will help to direct the organisation in a suitable response to prevailing circumstances. The aspect of framing the appropriate questions is addressed by Fantini and Narayandas (2023) and agile leadership by Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2023).

5 Discussion

A framework to deliver 'Agile marketing projects' was developed, using the research results. This comprises the recommendations from the empirical study, supported by the literature, to assist in performing such projects. A format for learning in a project management context (McClory et al, 2017), is utilised as an organising device. This proposes that knowledge can be acquired at different levels, during a project. These are: project; process; organisation. This article suggests that projects can possess 'triple loop learning', that comprises learning at these different levels. This learning is iterative, as each part of the project is completed then knowledge is acquired and used to inform the next part of the project. This occurs at each level and the learning can be transferred to the other levels, as appropriate. An example of the latter would be a decision to adopt more sustainable policies at the organisation level which is then implemented at the process level. The revised procedures are then utilised in the project. The recommendations from the research were categorised at these levels and presented in diagrammatic form (see Diagram 1 below).

Diagram 1. A Framework for Delivering Agile Marketing Projects

Organisation

Focus the project's effort on the customer and ensure the working arrangements, including funding, support this objective. This needs to be reviewed to align current arrangements.

Define the new brand and identify the customers to be targeted. Review the brand properties and customer needs on a regular basis.

Arrange the customers into types and develop a profile per market segment, then address with their own tailored marketing and products or services, as required. Select the main marketing channel for the anticipated customer profile and prioritise spending and communications.

Check customer requirements and predicted level of demand. This should include product and service features, including image characteristics. The latter will cover sustainability, embracing the environment and treatment of people. Respond rapidly to changes in these requirements.

Build a strong relationship with the customer. This can utilise technology and should include access to human representatives, where the task or the customer dictates this requirement.

Process

Coordinate the internal organisation to guarantee that the culture supports the project. This should comprise an ongoing process of alignment.

Set standards of quality for the project, especially outputs, including products, services and marketing techniques. Make regular checks on the standards.

Investigate the results of the projects. This should include checking perceptions of key stakeholders, including the customers, to assess success or failure.

Project

Set clear, measurable objectives and change them, based on feedback.

Address the data requirements of the project to ensure availability for analysis. Check the data is updated to reflect the current position.

Technology should be employed as required to support the project. The development of a customer community could be encouraged via social media or a platform dedicated to the brand. Partnerships with technology companies could be developed, in order to promote the project brand (perhaps through inclusion on an online marketplace or embedded in the company's products to advertise the brand).

6 Conclusion

This research proposed a framework for the delivery of 'agile marketing projects'. The objective was to contribute to theory and practice in this sphere. The potential improvement of practice in marketing is, thus, addressed. This work can be extended by interviewing a wide range of marketing academics and professionals from different sectors and other global locations.

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Dr Garry Blair
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CHAPTER 9 - Charity Marketing Initiatives

'Selling the Third Sector' - Critical Processes to Create Successful Marketing Initiatives for Charities and Other Nonprofit Organisations.

Dr Garry Blair, Lynne Turnbull, Humza Umair, Dr Ian Grime and Dr Rosane Pagano

ABSTRACT:

Charity and community organisations need to perform marketing as a vital activity. The requirement is to engage with stakeholders and potential stakeholders, attract and retain funding, as well as raising the organisational profile in the environment.

An holistic view should be utilised for this activity. The organisation's unique selling point should be identified. The requirement to define the products or service and the target population of the charitable or community entity is noted. Customer profiles should be compiled for each major variation, with an accompanying marketing initiative to address their individual requirements. Key performance indicators should be agreed with clients to define standards of delivery. Bids for new contracts to supply products and services should be subject to review in order to learn from both success and failure. Diversification of funding sources is essential to ensure survival. Potential activities should be evaluated using the principles of the organisation.

The research comprised interviews with practitioners and a review of several key articles from the principal journals. The main themes were then extracted from this data, using inductive methods. Recommendations were then formulated, using a systems approach, to assist practitioners in creating successful marketing initiatives and summarise the learning from this research.

KEYWORDS: Charity Marketing; Community Marketing; Unique Selling Point; Customer Profiles; Key Performance Indicators; Funding Diversification.

1 Introduction

The third sector is an essential component of society, providing vital support and economic activity for a wide range of social groups.

Definitions of the principal terms have been extracted -

'Marketing' is 'the business activity that involves finding out what customers want, using that information to design products and services, and selling them effectively'.

'Charity' is 'an organization whose purpose is to give money, food, or help to those who need it, or to carry out activities such as medical research that will help people in need, and not to make a profit.'

'Third Sector' is 'the part of an economy that consists of charities' (and other nonprofit organisations).

'Nonprofit' (or Notforprofit) is an entity 'not established to make a profit'.

(Cambridge Dictionary, 2024)

The third sector, comprising charitable, notforprofit and community organisations, is vital to society in providing products and services to support the community. These entities often deliver a provision to society that is not supplied by the regular public services. This sector is socially and economically significant, for example the United States has over 1.48 million active nonprofit organisations and these comprise the country's third largest employer (Ensor, 2024).

These organisations are competing for attention, customers, personnel and funds, therefore, they require an effective marketing strategy, in order to both survive and then thrive in the current volatile environment.

1.1 Problem Statement

The pandemic and subsequent recession in many countries has, however, caused severe problems for this part of the economy. Individual donations in the United States, for example, rose every year after 2012 until 2022, when they experienced a decline of 1.7% (Ensor, 2024). The number of charities was reduced during the pandemic with nearly a third of all charities, globally, closing down (Shadyac, 2021).

Third sector organisations have, thus, been threatened by the prevailing economic conditions. Closure and reduction of activity and influence have occurred throughout this sector.

1.2 Research Objective

The research aims to adopt an holistic approach to provide recommendations in respect of developing and implementing marketing initiatives for nonprofit organisations. This should help them to survive and prosper in the prevailing environment.

2 Methodology

Several interviews were conducted with practitioners from the nonprofit sector. Two professional managers were interviewed, whose experience covered a number of organisations in the United Kingdom and other countries as well as a range of activities, including senior management, strategy formulation and fundraising. The key themes were extracted from these interviews and this was also done for a range of literature from the principal journals. The themes were extracted without a predetermined coding structure, using an inductive approach, then organised into major themes (Blair and Pagano, 2021a; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991). An approach from soft systems methodology was then employed (Checkland and Scholes, 1990), in order to summarise and present the results using a systems

perspective (as per Blair, Barratt and Pagano, 2022). This research provides recommendations for practitioners in the third sector in order to assist in constructing marketing initiatives, thus contributing to strategy and planning in this sphere (after Blair, Barratt and Pagano, 2021).

3 Literature Review

A review of the principal journals was enacted and articles relating to the topic of the study were selected. The key themes were then extracted, using an inductive approach, without a predetermined coding structure. These were then organised into major themes, based on an overview of the research.

3.1 Donations / Funding

Shadyac (2021) considers strategies for charities to survive the pandemic and these can be adapted for the post pandemic period.

A focus on online contributions was required. The restrictions on movement in the pandemic meant that facilitating and promoting online contributions to the charity or community organisation was urgently required. This can now be a hybrid facility, with the return of in-person events and contributions.

Young donors should be enlisted to contribute donations and time to these organisations. This will give longevity to support. Targeted policies, for example using online social media campaigns and, perhaps, influential public figures to support the work, could attract this demographic's attention to the charities.

Corporate partnerships are vital to sustaining charitable organisations. Companies are keen to maintain a good public image with a corporate social responsibility policy that demonstrates their prioritisation of the environment, sustainability and social equity.

Digital innovation can be utilised for these organisations' activities. Virtual tours, webinars, chatbots and online videos, for instance, could all be employed to inform, educate and encourage contributions and support.

The compassion of people can be relied on, in that support will be given for good causes, according to this article. Personal updates to supporters can be provided and online platforms and communities can facilitate synchronous and asynchronous communications. Hybrid methods can now be used, with both online and in-person events. Communications and mechanisms for providing support can, thus, be enabled.

The importance of analysing and understanding donor behaviour in order to develop effective strategies for fundraising is considered by Kim et al (2021). The latter authors conducted research into a large charity and used quantitative techniques to study donor activity.

The separation of frequency of giving and amount is identified for study purposes. The distinction between individuals, who make donations, and members, who pay an annual subscription, is made. The former are said to be motivated by a sense of altruism and the latter potentially by both altruism and membership benefits, such as merchandise. The nature of the latter can also be considered, in terms of cost and the items offered, in order to attract potential members at minimum cost.

This comprises both intangible and tangible motivators.

Marketing policy can, thus, be informed by this research into fundraising data. Sources of income can be analysed, for example amounts received from pure donors or pure members and how this income is received over time, for example the time of year, prompted by marketing communications or renewal of membership. Marketing communications can be considered, for example, timing them to ensure membership renewal on the anniversary date, to ensure cashflow. The use of communications to prompt for renewal of membership, as well checking that repeated communications do not alienate donors, can be an important aspect of this analysis. It is important to understand the positive and negative effects of marketing communications, in respect of the target population.

A hybrid category, where subscribers make donations and donors become members can be encouraged via targeted marketing, to maximise contributions. Additional categories of donors could, for instance, be created to supplement fundraising efforts, provided there is no dilution here.

The fundraising data should, therefore, be analysed in order to inform policy regarding marketing activities.

The use of creative activities as an incentive for fundraising is explored by Xu et al (2022). These authors conducted several experiments and utilised statistical analysis of donation data to consider this relationship. Their conclusions were that a link existed here and nonprofit organisations could consider using creative activities to stimulate donation behaviour. The use of creative activities was shown to encourage donation, both in occurrence and magnitude. The creative act stimulated fundraising in this study. The rationale was also examined and the act of creativity stimulated a 'positive mindset' in the potential donors. This generated a sense of making a meaningful impact in the specified area. The result was an increase in the likelihood of giving and amount of funds raised in the sample of donors. The types of creative activities did not need to be directly related to the recipient cause.

This suggests a possible approach that notforprofit organisations could employ to enhance their fundraising activities. This area could be explored in order to obtain a marketing strategy that utilises creative activities in order to promote fundraising schemes.

3.2 Partners

Nonprofit organisations can establish partnerships with commercial companies, for mutual benefit. The latter are increasingly committed to corporate social

responsibility policies, in order to demonstrate their performance of ethical, sustainable practices. A link to a nonprofit entity could provide expertise, guidance and credibility in this area. An article discusses this type of partnership (Simpson and Varley, 2022), suggesting guidelines for such an arrangement.

Nonprofit organisations can be used by corporations to support their product launches. The former can provide expertise and credibility in terms of social and environmental awareness. The corporation needs to use this partnership to help to enact fundamental change in the organisation to establish more ethical, sustainable and environmentally-friendly products and processes, rather than a superficial enhancement of the brands in a marketing exercise.

A clear definition of roles is needed so that the two types of organisation can successfully collaborate on projects.

Perceived opportunities in the market can be exploited by such partnerships. The commercial companies can raise capital to fund or support innovative nonprofit companies. The example given was the establishment of a carbon removal scheme to offset carbon emissions. Several commercial companies raised the capital for the public benefit company to run the scheme.

Public sector organisations could also seek partnerships with nonprofit entities via outsourcing the supply of services and products. This allows the latter to deliver outputs in their areas of specialism.

3.3 Online Communities

The use of online communities as a potential marketing tool can be highlighted. This facility can give a competitive advantage to organisations via creating brand loyalty.

Bussgang and Bacon (2020) discuss online communities and their impact. These potentially give tangible benefits, such as customer support including education on the brand, aids to marketing, brand advocacy, feedback on products and services, as well as event creation, hosting and attendance. There are also the intangible benefits of customer loyalty to the community, with the social aspect being integral to this phenomenon. The notforprofit organisation can build up and retain support, using the online community to gain valuable feedback and allow customers to share experiences and provide mutual support and advice. These communities have the advantage of ready accessibility for potential members, without access or travel obstacles. The network effect of being connected to people is viewed as being a very strong motivation for loyalty to the brand and community.

The main characteristics that these communities need to be successful are stated as: a clear rationale which attracts members; facilities and resources that can be easily accessed; members can readily create value; straightforward governance to regulate the community.

The community can be monitored by the creator company by checking participation, value creation, the customer experience and evaluating the community building and

maintenance activities. This should give an holistic perspective of the online community.

Online communities can, thus, be a considerable source of value for nonprofit organisations, in respect of marketing. Complementary services, such as therapies and education, and products, for example giving pain relief, can be made available to users via the community. The support aspect is especially important, for instance in terms of customers and carers sharing experiences and may provide a key factor in product differentiation. Brand loyalty can be influenced by the presence of an online community, with its additional benefits for the customer.

3.4 Performance Measurement

Measuring the performance of the organisation's strategy is considered by Kenny (2023a). This should permit the assessment of the marketing strategy, in the environmental context. The main issue, as suggested by this article, is a disconnect between key performance indicators (KPIs) and organisational practice. Several examples are cited, such as a notforprofit organisation with fragmented, disconnected indicators. The chief executive changed these to focus on the stakeholders, including people with autism and their families, thus measuring results that had a tangible positive effect on them.

The principal solution, therefore, is to define performance measurement according to the organisation's key stakeholders. These measures should, therefore, indicate how well the areas that matter to these individuals and groups are being addressed.

Measuring activity should focus on outcomes that are important to these key stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, employees and shareholders. This will assist in delivering results that are meaningful to these personnel and will affect the perception of the organisation.

It is also vital to consider the level of analysis. Measures that are appropriate at one level may not be satisfactory at another. A possible solution is to develop the performance metrics from the top of the organisation and then at each level moving downwards through to the lowest level. This should ensure consistency of reporting and eliminate any omissions, where key data is not collected or is not compatible with other levels. The strategy and the measures should, thus, be consistent.

3.5 Governance / Procedures

The infrastructure for volunteers and different modes of engagement are considered by Gruber and Deschênes (2024). Volunteers are a vital resource for charities and other forms of notforprofit organisation. Marketing the organisation to volunteers is, therefore, a critical activity in order to secure this essential support. A case study of an organisation located in a European capital city, representing an international charity, was detailed in this article. The recruitment, training and management of volunteers was very established, with a strong commitment to the cause expected from all recruits. The emergence of a new type of volunteer, who preferred to give their time and efforts occasionally, probably as part of a portfolio of interests, rather

than the dedicated service of the 'traditional' volunteers, was noted. The organisation recognised the need to change the infrastructure to accommodate and recruit this new type of volunteer, who were less committed to the charity but offered a potentially useful resource. The charity, hence, developed a new membership category for the latter. They had different uniforms for these volunteers, that were returned after the volunteer projects. They were briefed and supervised, as necessary, by the 'regular' volunteers. Contact was via the website and direct requests for support were made, based on the volunteers' recorded skills and experience. These 'casual' volunteers were engaged only for the duration of a specific task or project. They were not expected to provide ongoing service or undergo a training programme but were treated as a useful resource for specific jobs, according to their skills and experience. This category of volunteers was introduced to appeal to individuals who did not want to commit to a more dedicated form of volunteering. They preferred to restrict their engagement to specific periods, in order to suit their lifestyle, which included other interests.

The infrastructure was, therefore, required to accommodate this new category and facilitate their periodic contribution. This type of membership could also be marketed to potential volunteers, who wanted a more 'casual', periodic form of engagement.

The requirement to offer different modes of engagement to volunteers, who have different expectations, is noted and this will, therefore, have implications for the accompanying organisational infrastructure.

3.6 Business Model

The article by Brumme and Trelstad (2023) examines the key elements of a nonprofit startup, in considering the choice between profit and nonprofit modes for starting an enterprise.

Market type and maturity are important factors in this decision process. The presence of a definite need for the product or service and a potential market is paramount, as well as the prospective customers' ability to pay. A nonprofit venture could be suitable for an undeveloped market with customers who have lower levels of discretionary income, for instance.

An online education platform in India is cited as an example of a successful nonprofit startup company, attracting donors to help fund a socially important product in a developing market.

The requirement for capital investment to initiate and maintain the organisation is a key consideration. The potential source of these funds, for example via donations, customer payments and corporate sponsors, is another critical factor in the nonprofit startup.

The prospect of generating income and attaining commercial investment is noted. Products and services from nonprofit organisations could be developed in order to generate surplus income and even be converted to commercial enterprises, perhaps enhancing their contribution to social causes.

The potential workforce is a vital consideration. The requisite labour should be identified. These could be volunteers or staff prepared to work for less than the average or minimum wage. The organisation may also have access to public or private sector personnel resources and systems, due to its nonprofit status. The focus on social or community objectives may facilitate employment of dedicated staff at reduced cost.

These areas are critical to nonprofit organisations as ongoing concerns, as well as startup initiatives.

Athuraliya (2022) explains the Business Model Canvas (by Osterwalder and Pigneur) as a tool for startup enterprises, including nonprofit organisations. This attempts to create an holistic understanding of the proposed venture to enable it to be operationalised. A template is used to allow key elements to be completed by the appropriate personnel, perhaps as a team activity.

Critical elements for a new enterprise should be defined, in order to formulate a viable product or service. The prospective customers should be identified and profiled according to their characteristics, together with a statement of the value proposition from the organisation and the methods of communication with these customer groups. Potential partners and sources of funding, such as donations or 'crowdfunding' via the web, should be ascertained, as well as the possible cost and revenue of the new enterprise. The marketing channels should be determined, for example, dedicated such as the organisation's website and hosted, such as a digital sales platform, as well as more traditional methods, for instance television advertising and billboards. The key activities of the new enterprise can, therefore, be discerned.

This technique can also be used to consider department initiatives or product launches, as appropriate, prompting an organisation to answer critical questions to define the key aspects of a marketing initiative.

An agile approach can be employed (after Blank, 2013) in order to create the product and marketing content. This may entail surveying a group of potential customers or their representatives in order to gain preliminary feedback on iterations of the product or service, thus assisting in defining the product and the marketing approach. A number of iterations, producing prototypes, may be required, in order to define a viable final version and accompanying marketing activities, based on this feedback.

3.7 Value

Bertini et al (2024) discuss the commercial approach of nonprofit organisations charging for their products and services. This entails marketing a shared proposition of value that affords an element of ownership to the customer. An example is offered of water pumps being installed at a cost to the local community, leading to improved maintenance and usage of that resource, due to the contribution from the customers.

The objective is to seek a sustainable pricing structure and mechanism for payment that benefits the nonprofit organisation and its customers. This may entail leasing and credit arrangements, for example.

Funds from customers can be invested to allow further expansion to new areas. External funding from companies and individuals is viewed as being more difficult to attract with more potential costs and conditions.

The suggestion is that segmentation of customers should occur, according to their characteristics. This should include their ability to pay for the outputs. Potential beneficiaries who cannot afford these products and services should be given them at no charge, with perhaps a scale of charges and different payment and credit mechanisms being offered, depending on the customer profile. This should permit an element of cross-subsidisation.

Education may be needed to ensure that the customers understand the benefits, costs and obligations of these arrangements. This provides the opportunity for targeted marketing to the potential customers. This should, thus, be differentiated in approach by the customer profile and the accompanying requirements.

Accountability should, ideally, be shared between the nonprofit organisation and its customers. The use of payment mechanisms should encourage this mutual relationship. Customers can thus be motivated to demand standards and adherence to these standards from the nonprofit organisation. The requirement here is to agree on the service or products and the change agenda, so both parties have an accepted definition.

Kenny (2023b) addresses the topic of creating value for organisations. It is an essential activity for organisations to create value and this should be based on the requirements of their stakeholders.

This article identifies different ways of determining what an organisation's customers value.

Price is an important criterion in some cases, so lowering price may be a valid tactic to improve customer perception of the product. This may permit additional numbers of customers to be able to afford the products or services, which are viewed as 'standard commodities'.

A more customised view can be taken by adjusting the non-monetary features to increase perceived value, for example via improved service or quality of materials.

A rational view can be taken to determine value, for example applying strategic factors of quality, delivery and service, including support.

More emotional reasons could be employed in respect of attachment to a brand, for example. This could be based on an advertising campaign, celebrity endorsement or recommendation from a trusted source, perhaps via social media or a professional or personal reference.

The criteria for selection could be entirely quantifiable by the potential customer, for example a higher price could be accepted for a more convenient service to be delivered as the customer requires.

The criteria may not be assessable by the potential customer, so recommendations and perceptions of value may be used. A decision to select private medical treatment, for example. The latter decision may use a high price as an indicator of value and rely on advertising literature from the clinic, stressing the high quality of treatment including references, use of the latest technology and techniques, for instance.

The proposition of value to the customer should be determined by the organisation, in order to ensure that the marketing is focused on the appropriate criteria for the customer.

The use of a strategy that is focused on protecting and increasing value, thus promoting organisational growth, is proposed by Hofmann and Sumanth (2024).

The rationale of value creation is viewed as being innovative, future-oriented and strategic. This can embrace administration and procedure, as well as design and product innovation. Examples are given of innovation in credit control and logistics that generated considerable benefits for the organisations.

The rationale of protecting value is viewed as being about compliance, security and scrutiny. This can embrace reduction of errors and attaining standards.

The type of job role may determine the appropriate rationale, for example personnel responsible for product development may focus on value creation, whereas those in cybersecurity may concentrate on protecting and maintaining value.

The notion is that organisations require both activities to work together, in order to create and sustain value in an holistic manner.

These approaches should not be confined to individuals but should be disseminated by leaders and within teams. This will broaden the scope for an organisation to create and protect value.

The key steps in this value creation and protection process are outlined:

Leaders should communicate expectations, in that the focus will be on innovation for all staff, perhaps linked to performance evaluations;

The scope should be restricted to several key areas and on terminating activities that are not adding value;

The requirement for the leadership is to ensure that the value generation and protection benefit the organisation, by questioning the developments. These activities should be aligned with the overall strategy. This will guarantee coordination

of efforts. Critical areas should be identified and addressed that are preventing progress in respect of team efforts. The need is to ensure that the areas of focus are appropriate for team capabilities and to change the focus or add expertise, as required. The innovations should provide an indicator for future progress as well as contribute towards potential competitive advantage in the organisation's environment;

The creation and preservation of value should be established as a continuous, virtuous cycle. The outcomes of these improvement processes should be evaluated and then the agenda for the next cycle of improvements set and implemented.

The concept of value is addressed by Zwikael (2024) in an article which provides a classification of project benefits. This should assist in defining the project and understanding the associated benefits for the stakeholders. The process of commissioning projects and evaluating their success is, therefore, facilitated. The taxonomy is meant to be comprehensive, embracing projects irrespective of their sector and allowing comparison between different projects in the same organisation. The value proposition can be defined and the expected benefits stated, in order to comprehend the project. The latter can be identified by the project's key stakeholders and this is a vital aspect of delivery, namely fulfilling the expected benefits, thus enabling a judgement of success or failure by individuals or groups.

The classification of benefits proposed by these authors used the 'ultimate beneficiary' concept, comprising the organisation that owns or manages the project or the public, for example. Financial or non-financial benefits are another key criterion to be employed for classification purposes. These benefits include revenue generation, cost savings and compliance with regulations, as well as learning. Public benefits include the environmental aspects, such as improving sustainability.

Marketing projects for charitable organisations could generate benefits both for the public, in respect of funding and providing a service, as well as for the organisation itself, to raise funds, enhance the profile and attract service users, for example. The value proposition, thus, needs to be understood, in order to construct effective marketing initiatives.

3.8 Review

The need to assess the outcomes of marketing campaigns and attempts to engage with customers is addressed by reviewing failures and successes in making such arrangements. The latter process is discussed by Earle McLeod and Gross (2023), where such analysis can assist in modifying future behaviour to achieve more successful outcomes. This can inform product, service, marketing and finance, in respect of obtaining such insights. Contract-making with potential customers for charities' products and services can, thus, proceed and the business will be obtained.

A critical area for investigation is the value of the choice to the customer. This can aid understanding of the potential impact on the customer and assist in future marketing of solutions. The main decision-makers should be identified. This allows

targeted communications in later liaison. Determination of the factors in the decision other than price should also be obtained. This permits the full context to be ascertained, allowing improved dialogue in respect of future offers and, thus, more effective review processes.

4 Findings

Several interviews were held with two experienced UK-based managers from the third sector. A semi-structured format was utilised for this empirical research, with questions based on project management and marketing in this sphere. The remit of the respondents' work covered a wide range of expertise, including fundraising, project management techniques and executive decision-making for operations in the UK and overseas.

The main themes were extracted from this research, using an inductive approach, as per the literature. These were then organised into major themes, regarding an overview of all of the research. The themes from the interviews were linked with the literature, in order to permit further analysis.

The perceived view was that leaders should have an holistic perspective and be flexible in their approach, in order to optimise the marketing activity (Blair, Barratt and Pagano, 2023).

4.1 Donations / Funding

A respondent stated that the need to obtain sufficient funding for the required duration and develop procedures to eliminate waste were viewed as being essential to projects being run by third sector organisations.

'Availability of funds is a critical aspect to ensure the success of the project. It is also important to try to avoid waste so that the potential is fully realised.'

'It is dangerous if there is only one source of funding.' It is, therefore, important to try to diversify an organisation's sources of funding. Heavy reliance on one source can lead to problems if that income is reduced or stopped. It is important to assess and manage this risk and create contingencies (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2021).

The need for funding was further emphasised in the statement, 'the requirement for a sustainable income is paramount. The project objective must be to achieve this source or it will not be able to continue.'

4.2 Partners

The requirement to establish partnerships with resource providers was mentioned. 'Partnerships are vital to charities, such as job centres. These can help the unemployed get job experience and references. They can facilitate the training of local people.'

4.3 Personnel

The marketing activity should be properly resourced with appropriate personnel. They should have the whole or part of their role dedicated to marketing the organisation, together with an appropriate marketing budget.

'Volunteers are essential to the sector. This group can outnumber paid employees by a ratio of 2:1.' The critical role of volunteers in these organisations is, thus, identified. A respondent stated, 'a full-time manager has been recruited with responsibility for volunteers.' Volunteers are a vital resource and need to be trained, resourced and supervised. It is important to have personnel responsible for recruiting volunteers and supporting them (Gruber and Deschênes, 2024). This is mentioned in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2023a), in respect of skills development and also learning and training using technology, in Blair and Pagano (2021c) and Blair and Pagano (2020).

4.4 Performance Measurement

'It is best if you collaborate on KPIs or there could be a conflict of interest.' Working with customer beneficiaries, where potential revenues can be generated, organisations should collaborate to define key performance indicators (KPIs) for the contract.

The need for analysing these key stakeholders is stated, 'we perform customer experience audits, in order to better understand the customer and help to define our marketing initiatives.'

'We are good at measuring outcomes. We measure the impact on beneficiaries and report.' Examples are social and environmental impacts, together with impact on the local area. These provide evidence of the effects of the organisation and should assist in shaping current and future marketing campaigns. Environmental considerations are examined in Blair and Pagano (2021b).

4.5 Governance / Procedures

A respondent stated, 'It is good to have clear processes, in respect of organisational governance. We have gained a better holistic view and learnt how important marketing is.' This is as per Blair, Grant and Woodcock (2020), in respect of arranging resources and introducing effective procedures.

The need to establish standards in respect of organisational procedures was emphasised, including formal certification from the International Organization for Standardization. This was said to assist in fundraising by demonstrating good governance, as per one respondent, 'Quality Assurance is vital to charities. ISO 9001 for example. You need to apply as this helps to get funding from sources previously barred to the organisation.'

4.6 Project Management

The vital role of project management was mentioned, in respect of the activities of these organisations, 'Many charities are entirely project-based organisations. Skills in this area are, thus, critical to these organisations.'

Important factors in the selection of project managers were outlined by a respondent. 'I recruited project managers and the key qualities I sought were: empathy; communications; organisational skills; and transformational leadership.'

One of the respondents described the objective of charitable projects, based on experience. The priorities and use of project management techniques were stated. 'The nature of the projects were: keep people in employment; raise funds and help other organisations to raise funds. The PRINCE2 methodology was utilised to aid this work.' The latter project management methodology (Projects in Controlled Environments) could contribute by helping to deliver successful projects. Managing projects is covered in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2023b).

4.7 Business Model

'The basic principles of marketing should be applied.' This statement stresses the need for products and services and their customers to be properly understood from the perspective of shaping demand and executing delivery (for example, using agile marketing projects, as studied in Blair, Betts, Conway, Hyde and Pagano, 2024).

The essential role of marketing is noted, as is the issue of limited scope in this area. 'The key failure aspects are: lack of marketing perspective; only social media used to advertise. The most important factor is branding, namely constructing the right image. The requirement is to build the right image and define the "target market". This will help to maximise returns,' according to a respondent.

Technology can be employed to assist the organisation in marketing and its other general operations and projects (Blair and Pagano, 2023; Blair, Pagano and Burns, 2019; Blair, Morris and Pagano, 2023).

4.8 Aims / Principles

'We evaluate ideas on what to do or not do, based on the principles of the organisation. It is important to stick to charitable objectives.' The importance of these core purposes is, thus, emphasised. The notion of delivering a commercial payroll was not pursued, for example, according to a respondent. This was because it did not align with the principles of the organisation.

4.9 Value

'You need to define your Unique Selling Point (USP) in order to market the organisation.' These organisations need to understand what products and services they are offering then match them to customer profiles. The nature of these offerings should be understood in terms of their markets.

'You should have a value proposition per customer group.' Organisations should define their customers and put them in different groups, due to their characteristics. They may need to define different customer profiles, in order to market their products and services (as per Blair, Betts, Conway, Hyde and Pagano, 2024).

A respondent stated, 'you need to understand your value proposition for your potential customers and markets.' Organisations should be able to define the value that they are adding for their customers. They can specify the value per customer group, in order to address the requirements of both their customers and the respective products or services.

'Encourage local investment via micro-loans. These will allow entrepreneurs to create their own businesses and repay the money.' The use of funding to stimulate economic activity and, thus, improve the local ecosystem is highlighted. This will require more sophisticated marketing as well as training but should produce more sustainable activities.

4.10 Review

'It is useful to have a post-mortem if we do not win contracts and for projects and successes, for example when competing for funds', according to a respondent. The requirement to have a review in order to obtain the learning from successful and unsuccessful bids and projects is emphasised (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2022, examine contract process, including review and format). This knowledge will assist future projects and routine work.

5 Discussion

A systems perspective is utilised as an organising device (Checkland and Scholes, 1990). The main focus of the recommended process is categorised according to the relevant component of the system, namely input, processing or output (see Diagram 1 below).

The environment will provide opportunities, threats, demand, resources, support and opposition, including competing demands. These will comprise inputs and shape the nature of the marketing initiatives.

The outputs are the marketing initiatives and learning, derived from the processes. This learning needs to be captured and used to improve future initiatives via an effective knowledge system.

Diagram 1 – Critical Processes for Creating Marketing Initiatives in the Third Sector

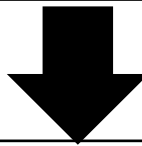
INPUTS

Form partnerships with resource providers.

Obtain funding from diverse sources and eliminate waste.

Recruit volunteers and develop systems to accommodate them, including different types. Allocate resources, including personnel, to this area.

Ensure the marketing activity is properly resourced.



PROCESSING

Construct the right image for the organisation and define the 'target market'.

Decide on the appropriate marketing channels to promote the organisation and its products and services.

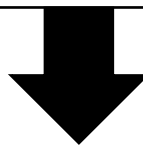
Evaluate proposed initiatives based on the principles of the organisation.

Use technology to assist marketing.

Develop / acquire skills in project management.

Develop clear procedures and document (also obtain formal certification, as required).

Set key performance indicators based on stakeholder requirements, thus ensuring priorities are emphasised.



OUTPUTS

Develop a 'unique selling point' for the organisation.

Develop a value proposition for each customer group and an appropriate profile to help marketing.

Review marketing initiatives to derive learning for the future. This should include an assessment of the impact on beneficiaries. Aim to develop the local ecosystem in order to encourage self-sustaining, positive change.

6 Conclusion

Empirical work, comprising interviews with experienced practitioners, and a review of key literature were enacted then a systems approach was used to assist in formulating recommendations. This research has provided guidelines for developing and running marketing initiatives to sustain charities and other nonprofit organisations. This represents a contribution to the understanding and practice of this activity, in the third sector.

Future research could be conducted in a variety of organisations from this sector in different countries, in order to extend this work.

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Dr Garry Blair
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CHAPTER 10 - Green Policy

'Saving the Planet' - A Guide for Organisations to Formulate a Green Policy

Dr Garry Blair and Helen Woodcock

ABSTRACT:

Organisations are now required to consider their impact on the environment, rather than focus entirely on their own objectives for profit generation and service delivery. An effective environmental or 'green' policy is, thus, essential. This necessitates an external rather than internal perspective. There is recognition by organisations that public image will be affected by such policies and their operation in practice. This article addresses the key facets of such policies, to assist organisations in their construction.

The need to set goals that are aligned with the business objectives, create an appropriate culture as well as programmes, such as on transport and recycling, is paramount. Educating the staff and effective communication should be prioritised, in order to implement this policy.

External aspects should be addressed, utilising effective change management. These projects and measures should be properly resourced. The focus should be on customers and suppliers, to ensure that such 'green' policies are effective. Organisations should be prepared to exclude parties who do not align with these policies from their operations, as far as possible.

The director of an international company in the 'green' energy sector was interviewed. A selection of the principal journals was surveyed to select key articles on this theme. The data was then analysed and the main themes extracted for this exploratory research.

KEYWORDS: Green Policy; Green Energy; Environmental Policy; Green Culture; Sustainability Measures; Environmental Goals.

1 Introduction

Organisations have a vital role to play in improving the state of and reducing negative impact on the environment. This will be via voluntary measures as well as adherence to compulsory regulation. An example of the latter is the proposed future ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles, set by several countries. This will affect organisations in respect of staff transport and supply chains, for instance. Stakeholders, including customers, staff, owners, suppliers and government, will also have expectations and make demands of organisations, regarding environmental practice.

The creation of a Green Policy by an organisation, in order to establish practices that have positive effects on the environment, is therefore, the subject of this research.

Definitions of key terms are provided (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). The appropriate definitions have been selected.

‘Green’ is ‘relating to the protection of the environment’.

‘Policy’ is ‘a set of ideas or a plan for action followed by a business, a government, a political party, or a group of people’.

‘Environment’ is ‘the air, water, and land in or on which people, animals, and plants live’.

This is a macro level definition, addressing the global view, and a micro level definition is shown below, considering the individual perspective,

‘the conditions that you live or work in and the way that they influence how you feel or how effectively you can work’.

The notion of a Green Policy for an organisation, to consider the impact on the environment, is thus defined as the selected topic for this research.

‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ (CSR) is ‘the idea that a company should be interested in and willing to help society and the environment...’ as well as fulfilling its own economic aims.

Environmental or Green Policy also includes CSR, as defined. CSR Policy usually comprises an organisation’s statement on sustainability for its external stakeholders. The remit of this research utilises an holistic view, including the internal and external policies of organisations.

1.1 Problem Statement

The urgent requirement to protect and improve our environment is the motivation for this research. Failure to address such issues, as profit-generation was prioritised, has led to a critical position, regarding the global environment. Organisations have a key role to play in restoring and improving this situation. This ranges from creating policy to make positive contributions to the environment to running projects that deliver improvements in this sphere.

The global objectives for the environment have been set by the United Nations, in the form of their sustainable development goals (United Nations, 2015). Organisations comprise a vital part of the initiative to fulfil these aims. There have been problems in attaining the latter objectives. Several examples of key areas where progress has been slow are discussed below (citations from Statista), together with potential activities that organisations could perform to contribute to these areas.

The majority of countries that have imposed a ban on sales of new petrol or diesel vehicles (60 currently) have set dates from 2035 or later for this to come into effect (Buchholz, 2024b).

Organisations can assist this effort by giving incentives to staff using green methods of transport and encouraging suppliers to convert to such methods

Few countries have plastic bottle recycling schemes, with around 30 countries recorded as having such facilities (Buchholz, 2024a).

Organisations can have recycling schemes for their products and premises, including plastic waste.

Waste disposal is also problematic, with large percentages of national waste still going to landfill, rather than being recycled. The Americas (United States, Canada and some of South America), for example, is recorded as having over 56% of all waste being sent to landfill (Buchholz, 2023).

Organisations can initiate recycling schemes to reduce their total waste produced.

The 66 countries that have committed to achieving a carbon neutral position have mostly set dates on or after 2050 (Zandt, 2021). This entails reducing and offsetting carbon emissions to obtain a neutral position, in terms of environmental pollution.

Organisations can commit to achieving carbon neutrality in their operations, using carbon offsetting schemes to assist this objective, for instance

Attitudes towards green issues have also been slow to change, according to this source. A survey was performed to ascertain views on the environment (by Statista). This revealed that on or over 60% of the respondents, in a majority of the countries studied, did not think the environment was a major issue (Fleck, 2024).

Organisations can run courses and utilise communications to educate staff, shareholders, customers and suppliers on green issues and the potential threats. An inclusive approach to formulating strategy in this area should be taken, encouraging input from stakeholders, thus enlisting their support. This is an opportunity for organisations to demonstrate leadership on environmental matters in their spheres of influence.

1.2 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to provide a guideline for organisations to create a policy that addresses issues in the environment. The process and format of this policy will be considered and recommendations made, in order to assist practice and contribute to theory, in respect of organisational behaviour.

2 Methodology

This is exploratory research with the principal aim of investigating the area of organisations constructing a Green Policy, that is designed to address environmental

impact. The main question was, therefore, 'how can organisations create a Green Policy?'. This should address the process and contents of such a policy.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Director of a 'Green' Energy company. A survey of the recent literature in this research area was conducted, focusing on selected principal journals. The data gathered from the interviews and literature search was then analysed and the key themes were extracted. These were then organised using a structure of main themes. The interview results were related to the literature in order to further analyse this data by establishing common links. An inductive, 'grounded' approach was adopted, identifying the themes without using a predefined coding structure (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991; Blair and Pagano, 2021a). An attempt was then made to make recommendations in this area of practice, comprising organisational policy on the environment. A template for such policy was constructed to contribute to the spheres of academia and practice, as well as summarise the knowledge acquired in this research (as per Blair, Pagano and Burns, 2019).

The framework from an article that proposed a symbiotic relationship between technology and the environment, via a literature review, was utilised to organise this research (Blair and Pagano, 2021b). This allowed the framework to be tested with practice data, as well as providing an organising device for this work and extending its form. The main factors were: power; recycle; regulate; innovation. These were used to categorise the research themes, according to their principal focus. These are detailed below, as adapted for use with this research:

Power / Resources - green sources of power should be used and the organisation's resources should be created in a sustainable manner;

Recycle - the organisation should have circular processes, as far as possible, so that outputs can be reused internally or externally;

Regulate / Manage - rules are created to promote sustainability and social equity. These can be regulations imposed on the organisation or internal codes of conduct. Management of the organisation should be focused on achieving and maintaining sustainable practice;

Innovation - technological initiatives can support and enable sustainable operations. Innovation can also be encouraged in the personnel, thus obtaining suggestions for improvements in terms of activities to promote sustainability. These could be regarding processes, for example organising work, as well as technologies.

3 Literature Review

A review of the literature was conducted, examining the principal journals. Current articles on the topic of formulating a Green Policy for organisations were selected and analysed to discern the key themes. These themes were produced using inductive methods and then organised via a framework from an article on the environment.

3.1 Power / Resources

Kaplan and McMillan (2021) propose an updated version of the traditional 'Balanced Scorecard' model, incorporating ESG factors. This utilises a perspective of the 'triple bottom line' (Elkington, 1997), thus permitting social and environmental aspects to be considered, as well as economic issues, in organisational decision-making. The article employs several examples to illustrate the techniques. The aim is to contribute to the ecosystem by embracing a system that includes all stakeholders, so the gains of the public or private enterprise are shared and, hence, owned by all of the associated parties. This could mean encouraging suppliers via investment and educational programmes, thus improving the network. Product development is then regarded in an holistic way, rather than former exploitative viewpoints, namely seeking the lowest prices for inputs, including labour and raw materials with the highest margins on the final, finished products. The development of appropriate key performance indicators with metrics in all spheres, economic, social and environmental, is central to this approach, which can be utilised in both public and private sectors. The importance of the social and environmental perspectives can be assured by the presence of such indicators, for example carbon captured, reduction in emissions, increase in use of 'clean' energy sources such as wind power and contribution to microfinance to improve supplier companies. The key aspect is to redefine the learning in the organisation to create a new value proposition for the stakeholders, leading to the revised financial position, based on these inclusive values.

3.2 Recycle

The principles of the 'circular economy' are discussed, in terms of organisational strategies, by Atasu et al (2021). The objectives are to conserve resources by recycling or preserving products, utilising environmentally-friendly means, while obtaining value for the organisation. Several techniques are identified and examples given, as illustrations, by these authors. These assist in creating the 'circular' aspect, reducing waste and environmental impact via recycling products or extending their period of use. This contrasts with the standard process of making a product then using it and disposing of it after use, which has an impact on the environment.

Products and the production processes can be designed to enable recycling. This will depend on the products themselves and their base components as well as the technology to enable recycling. The environment will also influence this decision, for example a high demand for recycled products (such as pre-owned clothes and cars). The recycled components may be used in other products, unrelated to the original ones (for example, metals).

The use of techniques and materials to extend the useful life of the product is another option. This will defer replacement, thus saving resources. It may also give the product a competitive advantage over more disposable alternatives.

The retention of ownership, to guarantee recycling and appropriate maintenance, is another possible practice. A leasing agreement could be utilised, so that the seller

retains ownership of the product, in order to facilitate the recycling process (for example photocopiers).

The selection of the appropriate technique depends on the type of product, demand and regulations, for instance. The ease with which products can be returned (for example, plastic bottles) and the potential value that can then be extracted, are the criteria for decision-making, regarding the preferred organisational strategy in this area.

An analysis of the 'circular economy' is provided by Mayers et al (2021). This article considers the main features of this concept and suggests areas where it may have problems in its operation. The circular economy promotes the use and reuse of products with recycling of waste to generate more products, thus avoiding the typical linear production model of 'make, use then dispose', as noted previously. This represents a more sustainable philosophy, reducing the environmental impact of production via a circular movement of materials and products. The article addresses the problems with this approach. The degradation of materials that are subject to recycling is mentioned, as repeated recycling causes the resulting products to be reduced in terms of quality.

The complexity of current production techniques and products may also be problematic for increasing their useful working life. The potential for replacement and repair may be reduced, in this instance.

The issue of consumer expectations, being raised by higher standards of living and advertising is mentioned. This may mean that products could be replaced by newer versions, before the end of their useful life, due to fashion trends, for instance. Recycled products may be considered to be inferior or outdated and, therefore, may not be purchased.

There are problems with leasing schemes or using recycled products, for example, in that they could actually encourage more consumption by permitting additional users, who may have formerly been excluded by the expense of new items. The transport required to move lease products to the required location for use may actually create more environmental damage. Environmentally-friendly products, such as wind turbines, could be manufactured using techniques that create pollution, for instance. The retention of existing products for extended periods of use may actually be inefficient in that this stops the adoption of newer, more efficient products, leading to a greater net impact on the environment. The repair of older products may no longer be possible with parts designed for newer products, given the progression of designs.

The protection of the environment thus requires careful consideration of the actions to increase sustainability, in terms of resource usage, in order to ensure that these are not counterproductive, according to this article. The problem of over-consumption of resources also needs to be addressed, rather than focusing entirely on the extension of the useful life of products.

Young et al (2021) discuss the issues around sustainability and the implications for organisations in terms of resource scarcity. This article suggests that the emphasis on sustainable practices will lead to shortages of resources in this area, due to organisational demand. Examples of recycled plastics, sustainable cotton and batteries are given. The demand for carbon credits is also estimated to outstrip supply by 2030. The methods for resolving these problems are outlined. The suggestion is that sustainability should be treated as a form of competition, in respect of gaining advantage over other organisations who are competing for such resources.

Organisations can enter into long-term contracts with suppliers of such products and services. Vertical integration could be employed in the supply chain, as key suppliers are taken over by their customers. New supplier companies can be formed by larger organisations and their partners, to supply dedicated resources in order to satisfy sustainability requirements. Alliances can be formed between organisations, comprising both public and private sector, to expedite these supplies. Innovation can be utilised to redesign products to reduce or eliminate the requirement for scarce sustainability inputs in their production. This article, hence, advocates a proactive approach to managing sustainability inputs for the value chain.

The requirement for identifying and testing techniques to address resource issues in sustainable practices was noted. This should permit decisions and plans in this sphere to be tested, in order to improve understanding of potential resources required and outcomes, in respect of key areas.

3.3 Regulate / Manage

The 'sceptical stakeholder' in public sector environmental innovation projects is discussed by Kroh and Schultz (2023b). This comprises stakeholders who do not, initially, support the projects and may doubt the methods and objectives. This group may be persuaded to align themselves with the projects' intentions or they may actively seek to delay or terminate the projects. An empirical analysis of data from over one hundred urban environmental development projects in Germany occurred. A statistical analysis of the results was utilised to test a number of hypotheses and obtain the results.

This group of stakeholders was viewed as being important in assisting the project. The perspective was that they could supply 'creative dissonance', in questioning the rationale, including the proposed objectives and methods. This could actually strengthen the project by exposing flaws and forcing the project team to pay attention to these stakeholders' views and the areas under scrutiny. The requirement for innovation and correct resourcing is emphasised here, in respect of the project solutions.

The need for a formal management structure and project management methods was noted as being important in driving the project forward, although this structure should not be excessive as it was viewed as, possibly, hampering flexibility in responding to stakeholders and the associated challenges. The importance of technical knowledge

and diversity of personnel, in terms of their specialisms, together with the ability to manage the stakeholders was highlighted, in respect of the project team.

The sample was located in the public sector and involved environmental improvements so public interest was increased. The requirement to consult the stakeholders and try to obtain their support was viewed as vital for a successful outcome. An example was given where successful collaboration with stakeholders resulted in an innovative project design being delivered for an urban energy project.

A longitudinal study, over several years, of a public sector urban environmental project in Finland using qualitative methods was discussed by Lehtimäki et al (2023). This demonstrated how the project team could use key stakeholder contacts in the local authority to deliver the project outcomes. Several critical behaviours were discerned by the project team and researchers, in collaboration. These were viewed as vital in delivering the project.

The initial aim is to encourage staff to collaborate and ensure that support is available for the project. The required changes in organisational procedures should be commenced. Resources for the project delivery should be obtained. The changes should be delivered and increased communication and interaction occur to facilitate the required outcomes. Reflection should occur and adjustments to the delivery and objectives be made, as necessary. The project and feedback should be re-evaluated and final choices made, using agile methods. The change procedures should be established and embedded to deliver the sustainability objectives, initially as pilot projects.

A significant contribution was the development of a partnership approach to contracts, rather than taking a more transactional view with more prohibitive clauses. The notion of 'partnership dialogue' was introduced, representing a more collaborative approach to project discussions. This project generated learning that was disseminated to similar public sector initiatives.

The importance of stakeholder management is illustrated by Kroh and Shultz (2023a). The involvement and support of stakeholders is viewed as vital to successful implementation as well as the definition and achievement of the project objectives.

This article focuses on data from urban environmental development programmes located in Germany. The large number of stakeholder groups, both internal and external to the project, was considered along with the level of their involvement. The use of technology to manage these stakeholders was examined as a key element. The requirement was for the project to focus on selected stakeholders and groups then use digital tools to enable and support their involvement. A large number of stakeholders and groups could be a negative influence as competing demands and conflicting views could cause issues for the project. The use of digital tools here may exacerbate this problem by creating an information overload, excessive support requirements and conflicting data, requiring reconciliation by the project team. A high level of involvement, perhaps via these digital tools, is necessary to assist the project, in the case of key stakeholders. This could be problematic, though, if large

numbers of diverse stakeholders engage intensively with the project, thus causing delays in progress and resourcing issues.

The requirement is, therefore, for the project team to identify the important stakeholders in the project and organisation, as well as externally. Digital mechanisms can be setup to gather data and communicate with them. The complex nature of public urban projects, committed to improving environmental issues, with a large, diverse range of stakeholders and limited budgets, make them difficult to successfully manage and implement. Digital systems are a vital resource for communicating in these enterprises, identifying the key stakeholders and setting appropriate systems with filters to facilitate this process.

Organisations may respond to anticipate regulatory changes in environmental policy by government. This is considered by Kim et al (2024) in their research into the behaviour of the European Union and its member states, in respect of these policies regarding electric power and pollution. This focused on communications and the decision-making involving the key stakeholders. The organisations may implement changes to comply with expected amendments to environmental policy at a national level. This will depend on the degree of certainty that these changes will be implemented, based on communications with the state (as well as the European Union Commission administration, in this case) and previous governmental behaviour in this area. The potential for organisational benefits in making the changes in advance will assist in the decision to implement. This may include consideration of potential losses or penalties for later adoption of the anticipated regulatory changes, as well as relative gains in terms of their competitors. The position of the organisation and situation in relation to competitors will also be a contributory factor in this decision-making.

The attitude of key stakeholders in individual organisations, their stated Green Policies as well as experience in and resources for making such changes are all potential internal factors in the decision to commission such changes to comply with anticipated regulation in sustainability and environmental protection.

The use of certification to validate organisations' environmental credentials is the topic of Love et al (2024). The aim is to create system change in terms of positive contributions to the environment, including air and water quality, biodiversity and equity in society, for instance. This is defined as regeneration, that includes creating the rationale for this to occur. The premise is to benchmark the measures applied via checking for standards and, thus, granting certificates to demonstrate that the requisite level has been attained. This should permit comparison within and across sectors. A more holistic perspective can therefore be taken, in order to give external recognition to internal efforts to apply sustainable practices. Certification can occur at different levels, according to these authors. These are individual businesses, products, ingredients, for example. These could embrace the value chain which will include the suppliers and possibly customers as well. The implication is that the organisation may select alternative suppliers and even refuse to do business with customers, if they do not adhere to the required environmental practices. There is also recognition that the existing value chain may need to be changed to become

more regenerative, thus making positive contributions to the environment. The standards should be dynamic, in that processes of improvement should be in place, thus requiring a periodic renewal of the certificate to ensure this is occurring.

There is a scope aspect, in that organisations may need to attain standards in respect of the environment, social and governance. A company with the required environmental standards that does not treat a section of its employees in an ethical way, for example in an exploitative manner, with poor wages and working conditions, may be removed as a partner until the latter's treatment has improved. The certificate may be withheld until this has occurred.

These holistic standards could, currently, be difficult to attain, for example regarding the value chain, as this will involve all of the organisations, from the suppliers to the finished product or service. The need for more formal, auditable standards to appraise organisations' efforts in terms of sustainability is, thus, suggested. This will give an external perspective and validation to organisational claims and efforts in this area. The case for recognisable standards to be approved by accepted organisations is made. This could give a national and, potentially, global perspective and provide assurance that environmental policies have been implemented and are operational, comprising regeneration. This will give a clearer perspective of the application of environmental policy across the selected areas, permitting comparisons to be made between organisations, industries and even globally, in terms of stimulating regenerative practice and, perhaps, regulating this activity.

3.4 Innovation

An article by Hernandez-Lagos and Minor (2022) suggests an approach for organisations to leverage competitive advantage from ESG (environmental, social and governance) practices. The example utilised is from the banking sector. It is proposed that companies are competing for 'ESG-conscious' customers, who are prepared to favour organisations that prioritise these areas. Organisations are also competing for ESG trained personnel and investment that is targeted at ESG activities. A strategy is suggested for organisations to implement in order to be successful in this area.

The objective is to find a 'Green Ocean' activity, where your organisation's performance can surpass that of your competitors, in respect of ESG activities.

The first stage is to explore the environment to identify an ESG activity for which your organisation can outperform the competition. This comprises the 'Green Ocean' activity, where an organisation can outperform their competitors in an area where their competitors are not present or have poor performance. The use of public documents, such as an annual report and accounts, and environmental data can assist this exploration stage. The main competitor had only recently subscribed to environmental targets and had invested heavily in cybercurrency, which had high energy costs in generation. This is, therefore, deemed a suitable focus of competition, namely energy-saving mechanisms for pursuing business.

The next stage is examining the organisation itself to determine its core capabilities in the ESG sphere and any areas of potential exploitation in terms of gaining competitive advantage. An example is given of employment of a minority group. The subject organisation employed a higher percentage than normal but their main competitor employed an even higher percentage, so this was designated as an area where competition was not advisable, until it had been addressed. An organisation could also donate to a charity, for example famine relief in a particular region but this was not in the area of the core business, namely banking, so this was also designated as an area where competition was not advisable. The practice of using energy-saving techniques in business is perhaps more suitable as a 'Green Ocean' activity, given the organisation's outperformance of its competitor.

The execution of this strategy is the next phase. This entails the identification of the main stakeholders to target with communications on this strategy. There should, it is advised, be multiple communications in a planned campaign to reinforce this message and build momentum in respect of fulfilling this potential competitive advantage.

A study of multinational companies investigated effective CSR policies (Marti et al, 2024). A key element was the use of CSR champions throughout the organisation, providing the impetus for change in environmental practice. The companies' attitude to CSR was also critical, in terms of using an experimental approach to obtain optimum solutions. This ensured that local knowledge, derived from implementation of these initiatives, could be utilised to adapt and ensure successful achievement of CSR objectives. Stakeholder involvement and a responsive attitude to feedback from implementation is viewed as being vital to success in this work.

Companies that did not use this approach were less successful in such projects. The business case for CSR should be clear and key managers need to be convinced of the potential benefits to the organisation. This will provide a strong internal rationale for such work.

These are, hence, the factors to scrutinise in respect of achieving success for organisations in their CSR initiatives, according to this article.

The contribution of managers to environmental policy is addressed by Winston et al (2023). The primary role of middle managers is highlighted, as internal champions of change. The tension between financial and sustainability targets is acknowledged, with such managers being directly involved in reconciling the potential conflicts regarding resourcing and priorities. Levels of organisational maturity were identified, illustrating the degree to which sustainability is embedded in the culture, projects, processes and prevalent in partnerships and internal collaborations. The objective for these managers should be to drive the organisation to progress through the levels, in order to attain the highest one possible for the organisation. These are based on attitude towards sustainability and achievement of the requisite processes to make gains in this area. Organisations can attain characteristics from different levels at different times, hence may not be allocated to one discrete category.

Four levels are envisaged, from the primary one, characterised by scepticism and an attitude that gains in sustainability mean reductions in profits, through building capability, systems and implementing tracking metrics, showing comparisons with other organisations, addressing the value chain, including suppliers, and making strategic partnerships, to the final level, comprising leadership in this area. The latter organisations make a positive impact on the environment and lead by their example. Coalitions of such organisations can lobby for change and create impetus via their own actions, thus enhancing their contribution to sustainability, in respect of the national and international spheres.

The notion of organisations creating social programmes, to deliver significant contributions to society, define and promote their brands, is discussed in Aaker (2024). This contrasts with the view that social and environmental activities always have a negative impact on the financial position of organisations. The traits of such programmes or marketing campaigns were considered. The purpose should be a valid social issue and the brand should make a significant contribution, in this area. There should be good communications with the target audience, promoting the product or service. This should, ideally, create a strong impetus for the brand, demonstrating the organisation's commitment and creating interest in and demand for the products or services. The programme should be scalable, namely be capable of growth in size from an initial pilot to a national or even global scope, with the accompanying increased communications to reach this wider audience. The central notion of a social contribution should be represented by examples that can resonate with the target population. A wide range of examples were discussed, including a campaign for soap that emphasised realistic, natural and diverse standards of beauty, rather than the perfection of the usual models from advertising campaigns. This had a positive effect on the brand, increasing its sales by over 130% in 14 years. A bank was also cited, improving its status as a trusted institution by providing training for customers to enable them to use the digital advances in this industry as well as courses for young people to make them more employable, for example. These campaigns also had strong short-term effects on sales with the increased level of trust probably creating more sales in the long-term.

These campaigns are described as 'signature programs' as they create a distinct perspective of the brand, attracting positive attention for genuine efforts towards a valid social objective. The relationship between financial and social success can, hence, be symbiotic in such initiatives.

4 Findings

The director of an international company that operates in the green energy sector, who has responsibility for risk and sustainability, was interviewed on several occasions, using a semi-structured technique. The main area of investigation was the formulation of a Green Policy for an organisation. The key themes were discerned from these interviews, as verified with the respondent. Inductive methods were used to identify the themes, which were then organised using a framework from an article studying this area. These themes were also considered using the literature, in order to improve this analysis.

Definitions of key terms were considered by the respondent. This area was said to be, 'Any impact we have on the environment, namely physical or through products.' The holistic aspect of negative effects on the environment is thus considered.

'Governance is the operational framework to do things in an ethical way.' The importance of a decision-making structure to support and promote an ethical, sustainable working environment, is emphasised. Certification could be used to ensure that the required standards are present, also permitting external and internal comparisons (Love et al, 2024).

The individual aspect of sustainability is mentioned by the respondent. An holistic perspective is given, regarding the effects of pollution,

'Ensure individuals live sustainable lives in a safe and clean environment, living unrestricted, fulfilled lives. Climate change restricts this, in respect of living in a world that is clean and safe, by creating barriers for growth.'

4.1 Power / Resources

'Encourage use of renewable energy, recycling schemes, use of electric vehicles, cycling and public transport.' The requirement to embrace green energy sources, such a wind turbines and hydro electric power, is stated. The organisation can utilise this in the business, supply chain and staff travel, aiming to reduce its harmful emissions in an holistic manner.

The application of technology to assist in creating and generating the Green Policy is highlighted (Blair and Pagano, 2021b). The implementation of technology projects is further considered by Blair and Pagano (2023) and Blair, Morris and Pagano (2023). Management of the technology life cycles is addressed by Blair, Grant and Woodcock (2020).

4.2 Recycle

Addressing the value chain is considered, in respect of both customers and suppliers.

'Work with the supply chain to ensure the suppliers are sustainable, ethical and robust'

'Customers are significant as part of your carbon footprint so need to push to be greener. Be prepared to walk away if not green'

The requirement to demand 'green' standards to protect the environment, considering suppliers, is mentioned. The same should be applied to customers. The organisation should be prepared to end links with customers or suppliers, if these standards are not attained, even if this has a negative effect in terms of finance, according to the respondent. The risk management perspective is addressed in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2021) and Blair, Woodcock, Pagano and Endlar (2024).

4.3 Regulate / Manage

'It has to be part of the culture to do well, with everyone on board and driving the objective forward. Embed the culture and have a clear policy on communicating progress to allow people to get involved'

All of the organisation's stakeholders should be engaged with the Green Policy. There should be a positive commitment to deliver progress and adhere to the rules of this initiative. It should, therefore, be part of the normal operations and projects of the organisation. Liaison with government bodies should be included in this process. The strategic perspective and flexible leadership to implement such policies are covered in Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2021) and Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2023).

The marketing aspects of such organisational policies is addressed in Blair, Betts, Conway, Hyde and Pagano (2024) and Blair, Turnbull, Umair, Grime and Pagano (2024).

'Educational programmes on environmental matters as well as diversity and inclusion.' The importance of effective communication is stressed by the respondent. The organisation's stakeholders should be given the 'green message' and be persuaded to support this initiative and contribute towards its implementation and operation. The need to convince these personnel of the necessity of the Green Policy is paramount. Employees can, hence, be supported by skills development in this sphere (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2023a) and, increasingly, via online education (Blair and Pagano, 2021c) and virtual team working (Blair and Pagano, 2020).

'Need to have a consistent approach globally to ensure everyone is on the same page.' This stresses the importance of communicating the Green Policy to all of the organisation's personnel and associates then obtaining their commitment to the required standards and change agenda.

4.4 Innovation

The need to determine environmental objectives, formulated to have the desired impact, is stated. These should be coordinated with business processes and objectives, in order to facilitate these changes.

'Set the end goal, based on what difference you want to make, aligned with the business'

A process for formulating and implementing 'green' changes in the organisation should be established. Innovation is required to create environmental improvements, so this should be encouraged and adequately resourced, as per the respondent,

'Setup a green change management programme, using clear targets to drive change. The requirement is to think outside the box, in order to challenge thought and procedures. Resources should be ongoing and embedded in the organisation.' Change management is considered in Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2022). The

assessment of the option of outsourcing this work is noted in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2022). The use of project management techniques to deliver the required outcomes is discussed in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano (2023b).

5 Discussion

The main elements of a process to create an environmental policy for an organisation are specified. A recommended format for this policy is also indicated, in the form of a statement of the key outputs. These are based on the findings of this empirical research, comprising the interviews with the literature review. A summary of the findings of this work is, hence, presented, consisting of a guide for organisations to construct a Green Policy (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1. A Guide for Constructing a Green Policy

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>PROCESS</u>	<u>OUTPUT</u>
Power / Resources	Encourage the use of renewable / sustainable resources	Energy Plan
Recycle	Work with suppliers to ensure sustainable practices	Value Chain Recycling Plan
	Encourage customers to use sustainable practices	
	Be prepared to end business relationship if do not adhere to green principles	
Regulate / Manage	Embed Green Policy in the culture (formal / informal)	Organisational Procedures
	Create and promote educational programmes on this topic	Educational Programme
	Communicate Green Policy to stakeholders and get their commitment, using a collaborative approach (including government bodies)	Communications Plan
	Setup ethical decision-making structure to promote Green Policy	Decision-Making Structure
	Obtain certification, as needed	Certificates
Innovation	Set the Green Objectives aligned with the business	Green Targets / Programme
	Setup a Green Change Management Programme with clear targets	
	Use technology to improve Green Objectives	Technology Plan

6 Conclusion

This article employed empirical research, comprising a literature review and practitioner interviews, using inductive methods and thematic analysis to gather and analyse the data. The aim was to contribute to the existing knowledge on the environment, in respect of creating a Green Policy for an organisation. A summary of the learning was presented to assist practitioners and academics on this topic. Recommendations were made for both the process of creating and the format of a Green Policy for organisations. This research could be further developed by studying a wide range of organisations from different sectors and regions.

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Dr Garry Blair
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Conclusion

The pandemic has changed organisations and, hence, affected the way that they are managed. The environment has been amended. Hybrid working as well as more online jobs have changed the character of the different sectors. Global free trade practices are now threatened in an era of political mistrust. Protection of the environment and social equity have become much more important factors. These papers attempt to analyse aspects of management in organisations and contribute to practice and academia, in the context of a changing world.

Dr. Garry Blair
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