



A telecommunications company was experiencing difficulty implementing an organisational restructure...

This paper outlines the approach that was taken to identify and resolve the obstacles. It starts with an explanation of the problem then goes on to discuss the approach, the significant challenges that were overcome and tips for undertaking this type of exercise.

The business problem

A recommendation, to centralise business management functions, had been passed to the Business Management Group (BMG) in November. By January, little progress had been made; mainly due to the difficulty in agreeing the responsibilities of the Commercial Managers (CM). They would play the key interface role between BMG and the Business Units.

The assignment

The brief for the assignment was to agree a definition of the role of the Commercial Manager, plan and implement the role by 31 March.

The consultant's approach

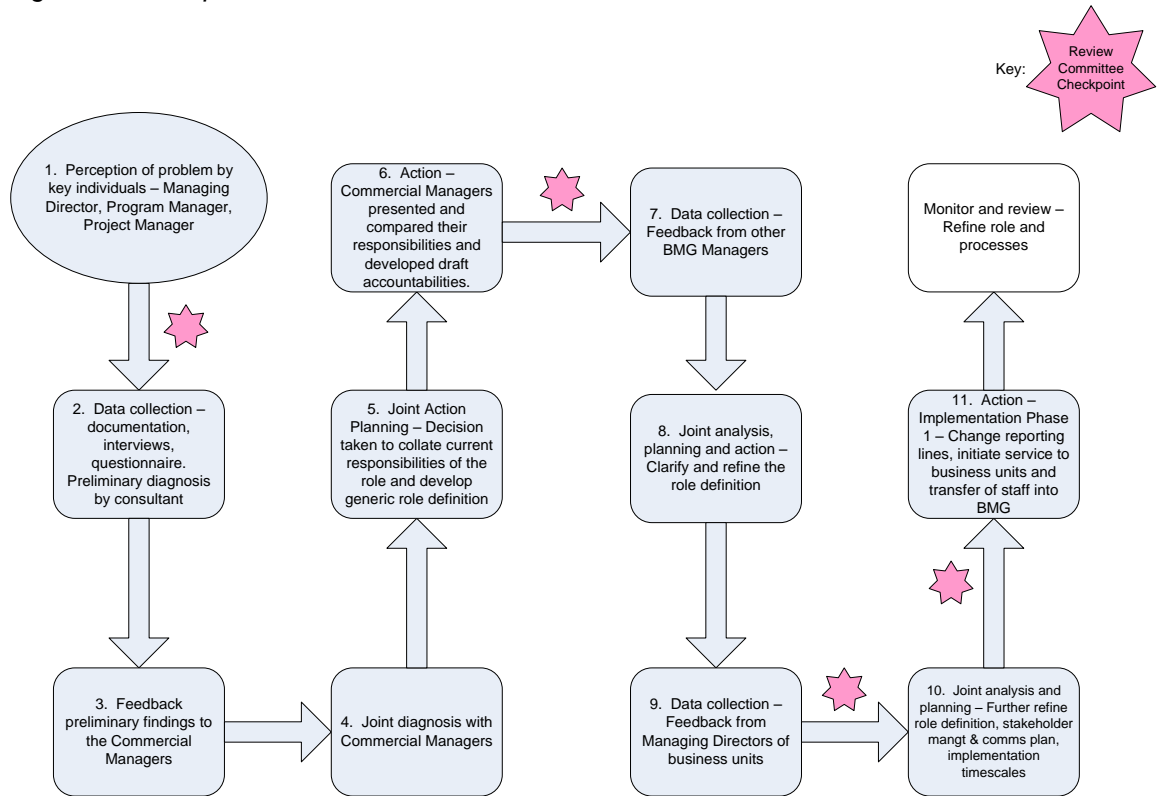
One of the main reasons why change initiatives fail is the inability to manage change as a dynamic process. This was an important driver in ensuring a holistic approach to this project.

A *participative approach* was essential given that the CMs were relatively senior and they held the key influential relationships with both clients and staff. Having an *emergent process* was going to be important in order to build ownership and teamwork among the stakeholders.

Figure 1 shows an overview of the approach which led to the Commercial Manager role being successfully defined and implemented.



Figure 1 The steps taken



(Adapted from Cummings and Worley 1993)

The findings

In order to maintain an appropriate approach, the consultant analysed the areas which were reinforcing or resisting the change. Table 1 shows the results of the force field analysis conducted early in the project to help plan the approach.

Table 1 – Force Field Analysis of Preliminary Diagnosis

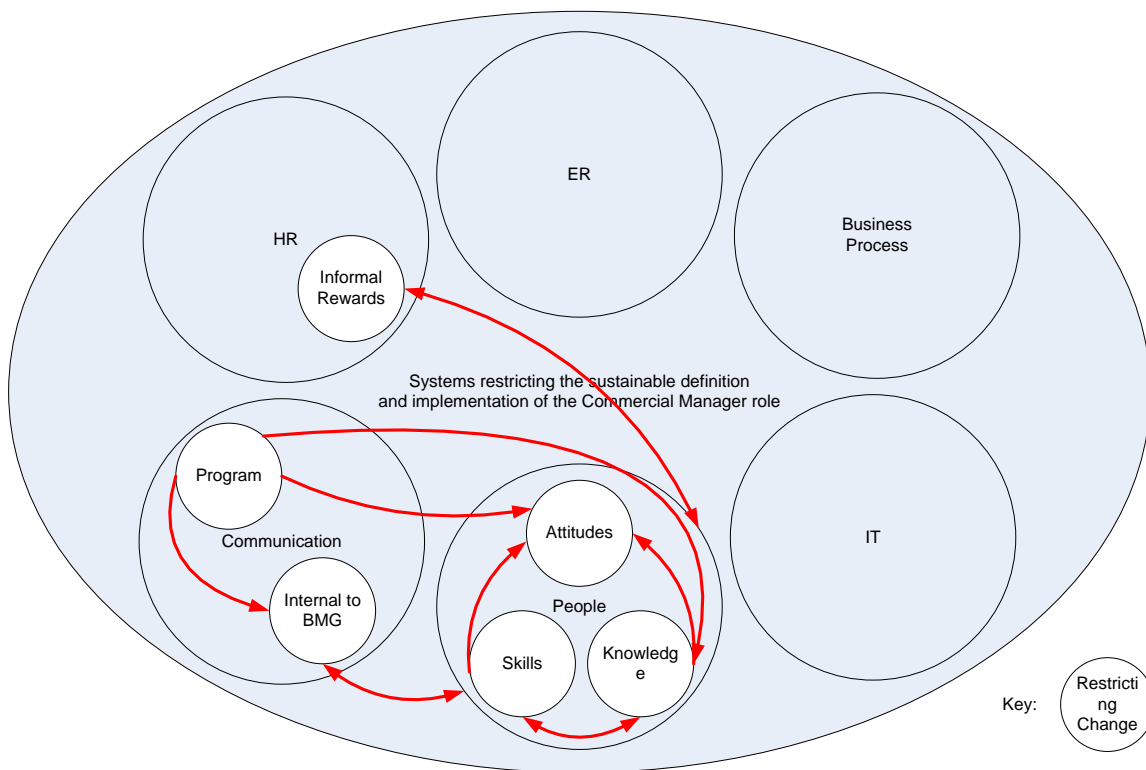
Factors that would <i>support</i> , reinforce and sustain the change	Factors that would <i>resist</i> and not sustain the change
<p><u>Drivers external to the team</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timescales. Context Obligation. Culture <p><u>Drivers internal to the team</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heterogeneous team. Group size. Vision. Motivation. Attitude. Inertia. Capabilities. Fair process. Performance management. 	<p><u>Forces of resistance external to the team</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture. <p><u>Forces of resistance internal to the team</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic human needs. Conflict resolution. Resistance. IR systems. Participation Heterogeneous team Team effectiveness. Teamwork Use of power.



Factors that would <i>support</i> , reinforce and sustain the change	Factors that would <i>resist</i> and not sustain the change

A further analysis was conducted to examine the links between some of these forces. In figure 2 the white circles indicate an area which was found to resist the change. These were acting like destructive cells undoing the good work of the other, more constructive areas. As is so often the case, the effect that the “People” system was having on the ability to implement and sustain the change was significant in the overall view. Figure 2 shows how interrelated these systems were. This gave a clear indication of the priority areas to focus on.

Figure 2 Impact of the people system



The consultant recommended that the organisation focus on behaviour change using the KPIs as a means of goal setting but monitoring them more actively than the standard Performance Management process recommended. This reinforced the change and provided objective measures of progress.

Challenges overcome

Obstacles to collaboration. Aspects of history, relationships, power, fear, resistance, leadership and personality differences were among the forces which had to be overcome in order to achieve a collaborative approach. Working together towards a common goal supported a more collaborative approach to conflict resolution.



Participation ≠ Collaboration

Organisation history. Successfully challenging and adapting the original recommendations was a powerful early win and demonstrated that they could overcome common barriers in the organisation to empowerment.

Resistance. It is not realistic to expect an individual's level of resistance to reduce and commitment increase in a linear fashion. The CMs dilemma in being both recipients and implementers had a significant impact on this. This was successfully addressed using a high-touch approach with all key stakeholders.

↓ Resistance ≠ ↑ Commitment

Sustainability. A force field analysis for sustainability showed that while there is a significant enough force in place to make the change happen, there are still significant forces working to reduce the benefits of the change. The leadership team are actively addressing these areas.

The outcome

The restructure has now been successfully planned and implementation has started. The Commercial Managers are playing a lead role in implementing and supporting their teams through the change. The high-touch, participative approach has ensured they are still viewed as senior, influential members of the team.



Top 10 Tips for Implementing Organisational Change

1. Be realistic about the level of behavioural change that can be brought about purely from a participative approach. Take a more holistic view of the forces required to support collaboration.
2. Do not assume that a drop in resistance will naturally lead to an increase in commitment. The journey through these is iterative and not necessarily related.
3. Think through the process carefully and tailor the application to suit the problem.
4. Make sure everyone involved understands the process and its underlying principles of participative action.
5. Include checkpoints in your plan to get feedback from a range of stakeholders on the process.
6. Communicate to a broader audience early and regularly during the less visibly active periods
7. Do an environmental scan early and proactively assess and address systems which did not support the change
8. Plan a succession of early wins



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9. Make a frequent assessment of the effects of power and influence on the process and outcomes. Develop enactive or proactive strategies to minimise the negative effects of these.
10. Leadership must be visible. This is critical to sustaining change.