

New Faces

Elizabeth Bertoya



Liz is a professional engineer and manager, a graduate of Cambridge & Cranfield Universities. She came into management consulting in 1996 with experience in operational roles and project management to board level in a variety of sectors, and has helped organisations in industrial, service and public sectors to achieve sustained performance improvement.

Her focus is on continuous and sustained performance improvement through the use of Lean techniques, which she has developed from the manufacturing sector to apply in service and public sector organisations. Elizabeth has a particular interest in the public sector where she is also a non-executive director of VOSA and the DVO Group, both part of the DfT, where she has been instrumental in implementing the modernisation agenda.

“People ask me how much it will cost to improve service – but almost invariably the answer is that it is cheaper to deliver good service than bad service. Time and time again we find that a large percentage of staff are working on solving customer service problems, either because we failed to do something for the customer, or because we failed to do it correctly. If we’d done it right in the first place, then they wouldn’t be taking up our time – and we theirs! – and our resources. But, as everyone is working their socks off (to fix the same problem yet again), management simply fails to notice that there is a problem.

If we focus on designing a process that delivers just what the customer and stakeholders require, we find that lead times plummet, customer satisfaction rises, costs reduce and staff actually begin to enjoy coming to work. I am passionate about skills transfer, and when we walk away at the end of a project, we do so in the knowledge that the local staff can, and will, continue to generate improvements. Now that’s what I call job satisfaction!”

The eGU

– the end of the beginning, or the beginning of the end?

Earlier this year the e-Envoy, Andrew Pinder, moved on and the Office of the e-Envoy closed down. It was replaced by the e-Government Unit. (eGU) The e-Envoy was responsible for getting government on-line, and the change of emphasis to the eGU has come at the end of what is seen as the ‘start-up’ phase. The government’s e-enablement target means that the majority of transactions should be available on-line by the end of 2005.

This is what the eGU says about itself:

“The e-Government Unit works with departments to deliver efficiency savings while improving the delivery of public services by joining up electronic government services around the needs of customers. It also provides sponsorship of Information Assurance. The e-Government Unit takes on the majority of the work previously undertaken by the Office of the e-Envoy.

The e-Government Unit is responsible for leading the work on Direct.gov. This was launched in March 2004 as a new electronic service designed around the needs of the user, making it much easier to find and access government information and services electronically. It brings together information from across many Whitehall departments in one place, making it easier for people to find what they want from government, rather than having to search across several departmental sites. It includes extensive content for motorists, parents, the disabled and carers, together with broader information for other clearly identified customer groups such as Britons Abroad and the over 50s.

This will be expanded over time to include content for other groups, including householders, jobseekers and adult learners. As well as government departments, the site links through to relevant third parties which can offer additional trusted advice and support.”

That hackneyed phrase ‘joined up government’ does actually mean something to the citizen. Let me give you an example. I recently moved house, and what I wanted to say was ‘Dear Government, we have moved to...’ What we had to do was rather different - we had to contact the government more than thirty times. We sent seven separate documents just to DVLA! Customer focus? Perhaps not!

It is good to see progress with Direct.gov, the starting point for government information for the private citizen, and increasingly with transactions available on-line.

Direct.gov lets you browse by audience groups, such as ‘Disabled people and carers’

and ‘Parents’ or by topics including ‘Employment’, ‘Learning’ and ‘Motoring and transport’. Alternatively, you can access government directories or use the search engine. At present there is no talk of mandating e-transactions for the private citizen, due largely to inclusivity issues. However, this certainly does not apply to businesses, whose website equivalent is Businesslink. Most businesses are likely to be mandated to carry out common government transactions – tax, VAT and PAYE returns, for example - on-line in the next few years, possibly sooner.

If you haven’t had a look at these sites yet, it is well worth doing so. At the very least you can see how other organisations are delivering e-services. Why not crib their ideas?

To discuss eGov, email:

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Key Contacts

At ValueAdding.com “We help clients to respond to customer requirements by improving their processes and costs through the skills of their people.”

SUBJECT AREAS

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CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

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SKILLS FRAMEWORKS

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CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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Develop your Change Agents - or develop a Brain Drain

“If you can spare them, I don’t want them.” A not untypical quote from a Change Manager faced with finding people internally to assist him with implementation. He knows the importance of effective change agents to the success of his programme, but he also knows that some managers are tempted to supply him with people they would like to be rid of!

Even if you do succeed in assembling an enthusiastic cadre of the finest talent in the organisation, you still won’t have a team that is ready to deliver. If they are to succeed, you also need to provide them with the right training, development and experience.

These people are given strange titles such as facilitators, champions, practitioners or change managers. However, the job they do is much the same in any change programme:

- Assist managers and staff with the technical aspects of the change programme (process mapping, project management, 6 Sigma, etc.)
- Be a champion for the change programme
- Be a conduit for communication (both up and down)

The task requires people who have highly developed analytical skills, combined with a drive

for results, and the diplomacy of an ambassador – a tall order, even for the best aspiring executive.

No one can be expert in all the areas required of the job, but these skills can be developed with a proper programme in place at an early stage – well before common pitfalls are encountered and the initial enthusiasm is lost forever. ValueAdding.com has trained and developed many change agents in central and local government organisations as well as a host of commercial businesses.

The Development Process

Our phased approach follows the progress of the change agents through a life cycle of, typically, 12 to 18 months. In the early stages of a change programme, a Business Process Redesign practitioner will help to map processes, run workshops, and interview operators, and is creative in assisting teams to come up with novel redesign templates.

As times moves on, the Business Process Redesign practitioner will need to plan projects and assist managers to deliver results, before finally becoming the organisation’s coach, facilitating, educating and mentoring managers, individuals and teams.

A good development programme combines formal training sessions with hands-on experience and effective coaching. The ‘knowledge transfer’

process is itself a key element of the overall change programme, for the new ways of working must continue long after the consultants have moved on.

ValueAdding.com’s approach combines classroom training with guided experience and coaching.

TRAINING COURSES offer a ‘safe’ environment to learn and practise techniques. New concepts can be taught in a formal setting to ensure consistency of approach throughout the organisation.

GUIDED EXPERIENCE gives change agents the chance to practise in real life situations - with the backstop of an experienced consultant in case they run into difficulties. They are given progressively more advanced assignments that will stretch their capabilities until they can run their own projects.

COACHING During the development programme the consultant gives feedback and advice to the change agents, working with them on a personal basis, tailored to their own individual development needs.

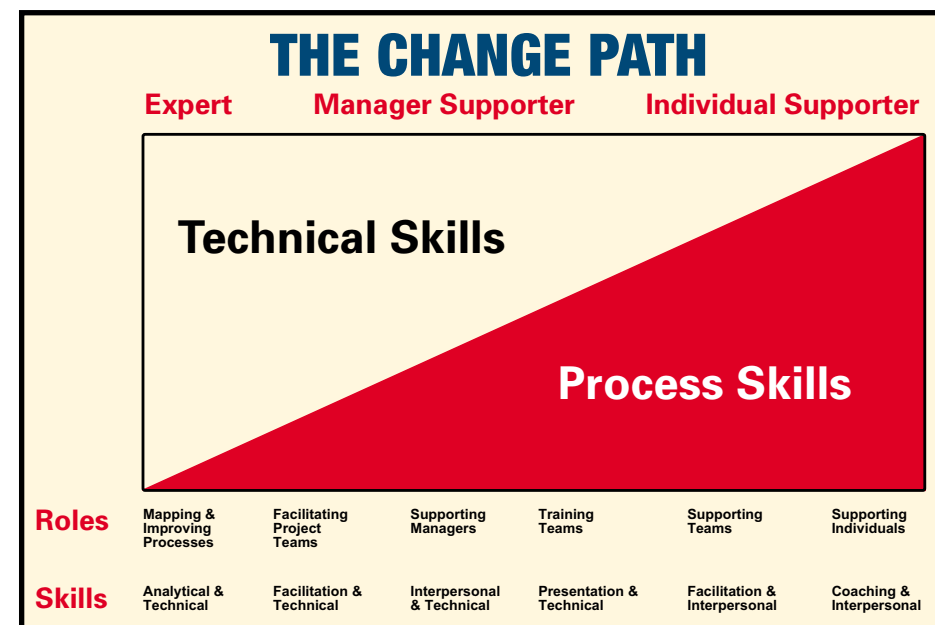
MENTORING The change agent must be effective within the organisation. Opportunities for career development and building personal networks are encouraged, and all the change agents are encouraged to share experience and support each other.

Becoming a change agent is one of the best opportunities for personal growth that any employee can have. It develops skills, confidence and ability. Many change agents go on to greater responsibility within their organisations.

However, if the organisation fails to offer the right training and support from the beginning, there is a high probability that some of its brightest hopes for the future will experience frustration and a feeling of personal failure – and will leave.

If managers do give you their ‘best’ people, it would surely be criminal neglect to encourage them to take their talents elsewhere simply by failing to support them in a difficult and challenging role.

If you would like more information about developing change agents contact Alastair Watson alastair.watson@valueadding.com



E-government – Automation is the LAST thing you do!

In practice, the rush to e-ify everything has been a driver for many badly conceived projects as well as some good ones, and it is now generally recognised that there is still a long way to go in order to get us conducting all our government business on-line. Some cheeky councils and government departments even consider the target to have been achieved if they accept e-mails as well as written correspondence! In particular, many organisations have been tempted - or driven by the tight timescales - simply to e-enable, to automate, their existing processes.

Often the old processes were not good ones anyway, but now they have become enshrined in the new system. Over and over we see companies fall into this trap – ending up with software that

reduces performance and increases costs, rather than the reverse. Service worsens and staff become de-motivated. Worse still, the organisation is now emotionally and financially committed to a long-term contract with the software vendor, and so it becomes increasingly difficult to change.

Start with Process

So how should automation be done? The key is to redesign the process, taking a customer perspective of what is required; in the government arena a stakeholder perspective is usually equally important. Given their requirements, simplify the process as far as

possible. Then and only then do you automate it - if you still need to and if the business case still stacks up! Successful government e-enablement projects have taken this approach, and it is encouraging to hear from one of the new incumbents at the eGU that they genuinely believe that process re-design is fundamental to e-Government and that they are committed to developing this.

Do remember: E-enabling a bad process is almost never successful. Instead, re-design the process with a customer focus, and you will see costs reduce as service improves.

For a discussion about BPR, do email: roger@valueadding.com

More work for ValueAdding.com

BRITANNIA AIRWAYS

Following a series of ValueAdding.com “Change Management” workshops for senior managers at Britannia Airways, a new workshop is being developed for other staff. This will be a practical session, designed to empower staff to make change happen.

HARINGEY COUNCIL

ValueAdding.com is assisting Haringey Council in Business Process Re-design (BPR) projects across the authority. ‘Knowledge transfer’ is a major element of this work, with intensive

training of BPR Practitioners who will carry on where the consultants leave off.

HSBC

We have completed the pilot of a bespoke course for insurance executives at HSBC Insurance Brokers. This will be rolled out across the country in the New Year.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

ValueAdding.com is working with a number of departments, helping Kirklees improve services through process re-design and transfer of skills.

New contracts include Development Control, Housing Services, Corporate Development and Adaptations Service.

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

As a strategic partner with Pearson Government Solutions (part of the Pearson Group, owners of the FT), ValueAdding.com is Southwark's preferred partner for providing BPR support to its new Customer Services Centre, which will provide one-stop, seamless access to local services. ValueAdding.com will also provide process re-design throughout the council, taking a key role in developing internal practitioners.

Reducing the operating costs of remote workforces

Mobile devices have been used for several years to replace clipboards, and to automate data entry upon return to the office. In many applications, this provides a significant reduction in data entry by the administration staff for such matters as jobs completed, material details, variances, and time-card records. When users are able to perform their own data entry upon return, this usually provides still greater benefits in productivity. The arrival of GPRS (2.5G) on public networks now provides the opportunity to transfer data remotely, to and from mobile phones.

PDA's can perform business functions such as data entry, form filling, photography and signature capture, and can transfer this information in almost real time back to the office. The imminent arrival of 3G will improve this situation even further. The ability to transfer new data immediately to base offers ‘central control’ the opportunity to:

- *Act upon information immediately, reducing the total process cycle time*
- *Re-schedule the operative's workload.*

Operational cost savings in the order of 20% are considered realistic in this situation, with

paybacks on capital costs considered achievable within six months. The customer sees an efficient, effective and flexible workforce, and that is good for customer relations as well as efficiency and profitability.

No wonder so many Local Authority managers see mobile hand-held devices as the solution to many of the problems of managing a remote workforce. The range of potential uses within a Local Authority is already large. Surveying, Planning, Street Repairs, Road Repair, Housing Repairs, to name a few, all involve an obvious mobile workforce. But what about such areas as Social Services, where paperwork is vital but time-consuming, for operatives whose value is in the field?

All for one and one for all = delay

Departments who identify business opportunities for mobile devices will often find their project caught up in “the bigger picture”. Typically, they will then be kept on hold while the corporate need is reviewed, and a corporate strategy for mobile devices and infrastructure is developed.

This in turn raises mobile technology to the attention of people who start to think of:

- *economies of scale – buy one solution for all;*
- *standardisation – easier to roll out to future applications, easier to maintain;*
- *security – fear of external access to corporate systems;*
- *balancing managing our own network against bringing in a costly service provider.*

The desire to create a corporate strategy which captures all these opportunities and defines the best supplier is a natural one, but difficult in practice in this rapidly changing market. Since this technology is very new, there is little experience available to resolve these issues quickly.

Systems Integration is critical

Although quite sophisticated mobile phones seem to have been around for some time, many of these remote applications are relatively new to the phone manufacturers.

The front end may look the business, but the device may not integrate with your back-end corporate systems. Equally your own

systems may not be communicating!

Unless the feedback from a mobile worker is integrated into sophisticated back office systems then it is unlikely that ‘control’ can respond to the information in a reasonable time. The ‘controller’ may have information flying in at the rate of knots, but if there are only outdated tools to help manage it, then all the mobile technology is wasted.

Most mobile suppliers are stand-alone solutions, so it is often hard to get a complete process review from them. They will naturally

tend to feel that a quick decision is preferable to waiting around for everyone to come aboard – one day. For them, complexity leads to delay and the risk of losing a sale.

However, without a thorough process-review, the project may not work out as you would wish!

ValueAdding.com has built up a wealth of experience in this area, from helping organisations to choose the best supplier for them, to mapping all the processes to ensure the mobile solution integrates effectively with back office systems and processes.



Getting your feet wet

New mobile technology provides excellent opportunities but it is an early adopter's market. There are few established suppliers with a comprehensive solution. In the next few years the technology will have moved on again. (Think how much mobile phones have changed in the last two years, then add on the power of 3G).

Nonetheless, the benefits to be gained today are real and achievable. Organisations that need to ramp up their performance should try a mobile system now on a local benefit basis, treat it as a throw away “pilot”, and upgrade in three years' time when even better systems are available. By then they will be experienced buyers, better able to define their real needs.

ValueAdding.com can help ensure that you succeed with your first attempt:

- *We help you to review the process from end to end, understand the impact on your back office systems, and the technology needed to connect them with the mobile device.*
- *We can assist you to understand the impact on people, and the change management actions required for success.*
- *We will support you to develop the business case, choose the right suppliers and push for a solution, based on local benefits.*

For further information, email to: paul.oreilly@valueadding.com