



DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

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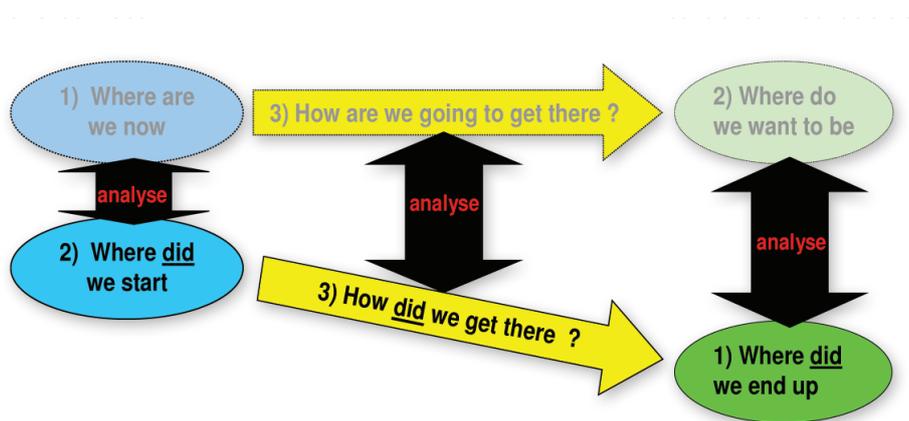
The Post Implementation Review (PIR) is closely linked to both our Value Assurance Review and our Opportunity Framing processes. In fact the PIR is the final review and is effectively a “reverse framing” of the opportunity. It looks at where we are now compared to where we wanted to be and also evaluates where we actually were at initiation versus where we thought we were. The goals are to capture and analyse the experience, views and opinions of the team in order to provide learning for other projects and activities; and to explore how value was created or destroyed at key decision points. At the heart of this review is a focus on the quality of the decisions made and their impacts. The review should be constructive and add value rather than be an audit while it typically serves as the disbandment event for the team. Post Implementation Reviews aim to improve organisational learning: to do the right things better.

WHY SHOULD I BE INTERESTED?

To embody a spirit of learning and improvement across an organisation and to avoid reinventing the wheel it is important to look back periodically and derive learning from what we do. The strength of the process is that it focuses on solutions and best practice and not for scapegoats and heroes. Ultimately the key questions that always need to be answered are: What have we learned? How good have our decisions been? What do we need to do to make better decisions in the future?

WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL COMPLICATIONS?

At conclusion of a project or initiative, the project team is typically coming down from a period of intense pressure and activity having performed under a tight schedule and with constrained resources, requiring a strong focus from the team. It is crucial to capture the team’s experience before they get distracted onto new ventures and while the learning and experiences of the project are still live. Typically this is done later, with only some members of the team, e.g. the leadership, when memories have faded somewhat.



Particularly with a (perceived) successful outcome a lot of the “not so good” parts of the journey are easily forgotten. BusinessMinds’ PIR process takes the individual team members back in time and the roadmap of the project is reconstructed through the “reverse framing” of the opportunity. Through extensive interviewing and thorough analysis of the information gathered, a complete map of the project and its key decisions is developed. This element already delivers significant value in extracting learning, helping people who were not in the “driving seat” of the project to understand the complete project trajectory, its inter-locking elements and how the decisions were made.



POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

There are many processes that attempt to extract learning from a project. Many of these however focus around what activities were done and how well they were carried out. While this is important, it is often much more valuable to understand why activities were carried out. The former focuses on how things could have been done quicker, cheaper, or better. The latter lifts the evaluation away from this useful and valuable but less insightful and somewhat superficial level and enquires and tests whether the activity was the correct activity (i.e. value contributing activity) to be carried out at that time and why it was done.

The drive to focus on the 'why' comes from a growing realisation that success of maturing opportunities or delivering projects is not only about carrying out activities well, but is actually much more about making the highest quality decisions. Through PIR we aim to focus project teams on decisions as opposed to activities.

The PIR is also a close out team event which psychologically helps people to split up, wind down and move on. The end of a project is a loss for many team members, who revert to their "home" organisation and possibly to the humdrum of their usual role. This can be a big let down and it's important for them to feel they've had a chance to explore their thoughts and get their ideas across.

HOW CAN BUSINESSMINDS HELP?

Learning from ones actions is a key element in the management cycle "Plan-Do-Review". The PIR process provides an opportunity for team members to make the observations that still need to be made. Where these are substantial, the development of them and the extraction of learning will be "facilitated" by BusinessMinds in order to ensure the discussion delivers value and allows for deep understanding.

Our approach brings a fresh and independent perspective to the evaluation of the opportunity, delivered via our structured "review and assist" processes. We break it down along the seven BusinessMinds attributes (Social, Environmental, Financial, Commercial, Organisational, Political and Technical) to help understand the project and its trajectory comprehensively and from all perspectives.

There is a growing realisation that opportunities and projects should have a positive impact on the ecosystems and people they affect as well as being economically beneficial. Ensuring that a balanced view is taken across the full range of the seven attributes is essential to review whether a project or opportunity is truly sustainable.

The value of having independent facilitation to keep things on the right track is immeasurable as it helps to ensure participants listen before they speak; keep out of the detail; can more easily challenge power relations; feel comfortable, valued and not exposed; ask the stupid questions; challenge the obvious.

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

As is typical with many review processes, open, frank and exploratory interviews are a key first step – so access to project team members, and also key decision makers and influencers of the project, is crucial.

The interviews pose a series of questions covering the "stories" of the project; the learning; the assumptions; the changes; the key decisions; and the balance between "fast", "cheap" and "good". We then use the interview data and the available documentation to re-construct the project trajectory. What happens next is effectively a reverse project framing workshop. The roadmap is played back then completed by the team, who will start recounting their "war" stories and start re-living the project. At this stage there needs to be a balance between sharing experience/learning and moving the process forward, to ensure the goal of learning for the future and not redoing the past is achieved.



POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

The extraction and understanding of the learning is a co-operative approach and involves all the team members. This means the learning is more quickly accepted by the team and embraced by them as their own as they move to other projects and teams. Key benefits are to:

- Provide external challenge at the final key point in the project lifecycle; help to assess the validity of decisions taken to date and the robustness of the work done and to identify key areas requiring focused attention during ongoing operation as well as for other projects
- Capture lessons learnt for dissemination across other projects and, where appropriate, facilitate best practice transfer and ensure
- If done on a portfolio of opportunities and projects, it ensures consistency in assessment of risks/ value of opportunities across the organisation.
- The process aims to add value to the team and do this collectively – it is therefore not an audit, but a truly shared learning experience, both for the individuals and the organisation.

WHO DO I TALK TO?

Helping you to learn from your project activities begins with a call to *BusinessMinds* to discuss the Post Implementation Review process on + 31 70 392 7894 or send us an email at info@businessminds.eu



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