



White Paper 2025-01

The Need for Dedicated Internal Resources for Effective Transformation

At Project Value Delivery, we are regularly involved in transformation projects for organisations, mainly in the area of project management and project control. We too often observe that executive level commitment on transformation is not followed up when it comes to nominating the transformation team, or when we need to address the actual transformation of the executive team itself. In this White Paper we explore the importance of full-time dedication of key internal resources to succeed in actual transformation.

Transformation projects are long, hard and intense

Actual deep transformations of ways of working in organisations require a lot of continuous effort to deliver the expected benefits. Changing habits is difficult and required repeated feedback and encouragement. This is why the discipline of change management has been formalised and is now widely recognised as an essential element.

Still, we do encounter organisations where executives believe that once a clever solution has been devised, the transformation is done (because obviously everyone will figure out it is a better way of doing things?). Unfortunately, developing the desired end-state is only a small part of the effort (probably less than 10-20%). A much larger and longer effort coupled with strong leadership will be needed to make sure that people effectively change their habits on a day-to-day basis.

Transformation projects cannot be outsourced

While taking advantage of external knowledge and experience to support transformation is a great idea for acceleration, transformation must remain driven as an internal endeavour to avoid the ‘not invented here’ syndrome (refer to our White Paper [GP 2015-02 ‘Why ‘Embedded Consulting’ Delivers Better Results for Enterprise Transformation’](#)). Therefore, the nomination of visible internal leaders to drive the transformation is unavoidable. Internal leaders and contributors have “skin in the game” and a particular incentive to develop and deliver changes that represent an improvement and that actually work. The dosage between internal and external resources can be adjusted depending on the circumstances. Still, a sufficient proportion of internal resources is a must and will greatly help during deployment phase and transformation team members will become eager ambassadors of the changes.

Executive team must be involved, transform and participate actively

If the transformation is significant for the business, it will also change the way the executive team and intermediate

management will drive the business on a day-to-day basis. It is essential that changing senior management habits be part of the transformation plan. Executives must commit the time for training to be able to ask the right questions and nudge the organisation in the right direction at each touch point with the teams. The leadership of the organisation must demonstrate by example its willingness to change. This is often a delicate issue in transformation programmes, because executives are even less ready to change their habits and behaviours!

Transformation commitment is demonstrated by the designation of a full-time transformation lead

At the end of the day, one of the real early tests of the commitment of executive management to transformation is the nomination of the transformation lead and other key team members. And this will make all the difference in the actual delivery of the transformation project.

The transformation lead must be full-time

Only a full-time dedication of the transformation lead can effectively deliver the transformation. Part-time is not an option, in particular if potential other activities concern operational

issues. Their urgency would always take precedence on the important transformation tasks (which are, in addition, often slightly outside the comfort zone of the transformation lead, and thus, more difficult – and thus would not be practically a priority).

Nomination of the transformation lead must hurt the business short term

Moreover, the transformation lead must be effective and relevant, and have the proven ability to deliver results. This means that moving him/her out of his/her current position will hurt the business at least temporarily. But what is the alternative? Outsourcing is not an option, and nominating someone that does not deliver business results is not conducive to success.

Therefore, from our perspective, the real commitment test for the executive team is the ability of the organisation to

We consider that there are two simple questions that need a positive answer:

- **Is the executive team ready to devote time to transforming and training itself?**
- **Is the nominated transformation lead full-time and does his/her nomination hurt the business in the short term?**

prioritise transformation (long term, important actions) over short term results through the nomination of the transformation lead that will hurt the business short term. This is actually a test: if the nomination of the transformation lead does not hurt the business, it is not good enough.

What to do if there is a contradiction between the communication on transformation and actions?

If there is a wide contradiction on communication around transformation but actual resistance to dedicate adequate internal resources, there is little probability that the transformation will be relevant, effective, and deliver the expected benefits. It will be more lip-service to the transformation.

In this situation, it will be difficult to motivate the teams to work on a transformation project with little probability for success. Some change may nevertheless be achieved within the organisation, but certainly with benefits orders of magnitudes less than initially expected. External consultants and advisors must consider whether it is ethical to support this type of transformation projects (shouldn't they rather say no to supporting such projects unless adequate internal resources are allocated?).

If it is really important to the organisation, management must prioritise and devote the means to transformation. We often observe that by putting executive teams in front of their contradiction has the benefit of moving them to effectively commit to dedicate relevant resources, considering the transformation as an actual investment in the future of the organisation.

Actual deep transformations of ways of working in organisations require a lot of continuous effort to deliver the expected benefits. Changing habits is difficult and required repeated feedback and encouragement

Summary

Many organisational transformations do not succeed to deliver the expected outcome and benefits. It is often due to a contradiction between aspirations and the willingness of the organisation to devote resources – taking into account that the effort for effective transformation is often underestimated. We consider that there are two simple questions that need a positive answer:

- Is the executive team ready to devote time to transforming and training itself?,
- Is the nominated transformation lead full-time and does

his/her nomination hurt the business in the short term?

Reminding the executive teams of these key success factors is often sufficient to refocus their attention to set the transformation project up for success.

This White Paper complements our Papers [GP 2015-01 'A Project Management Framework for Enterprise Transformation Projects'](#) and [GP 2015-02 'Why 'Embedded Consulting' Delivers Better Results for Enterprise Transformation'](#).

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