CC40 Sponsorship

Centres of **excellence** club

citi

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Introduction

CITI has been working for many years with organisations across various industry sectors in order to improve sponsor capability through workshops and masterclasses. There are a lot of organisations out there and a lot of sponsors working in them.

The need for sponsor education therefore is significant. So significant in fact, that for a second time in four years, we decided that it should be the subject of our 40th Centres of excellence club.

We invited a group of Programme and Project Management professionals to join us in London in late November 2016 for a day of presentations, workshops and discussions. We then asked Royal Mail, DHL and Thames Tideway to talk to us and their presentations are summarised below.

Rupert Fairclough

Host, Managing Consultant at CITI

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What is a Sponsor and what is their role?

At CITI our experience of working with sponsors and the leaders of the projects and programmes that they sponsor has enabled us to evolve a highly effective approach. Using a series of facilitated workshops we guide sponsors through the process of getting better at what they do. The impact of this on project success is significant. We believe that the main roles of a sponsor are to:

- *Ensure* benefit realisation
- *Own* the business case
- *Be accountable* for the project
- *Mobilise* management capability
- *Generate* confidence
- *Act* as a figurehead

Nick Dobson

Managing Consultant at CITI

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The Importance of improving Sponsorship

Peter Horsted, Royal Mail

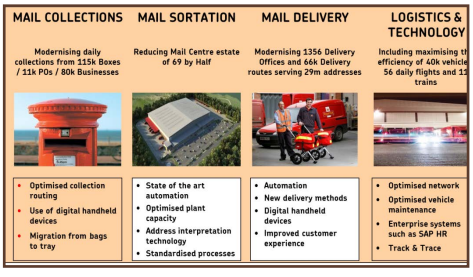
PROBLEMS – OR OPPORTUNITIES

What are the problems – or are they opportunities?

- Are they the right person?
- Do they have enough time to do the job?
- Are they accessible enough?
- Do they know what is expected of them?

THERE IS A LOT GOING ON

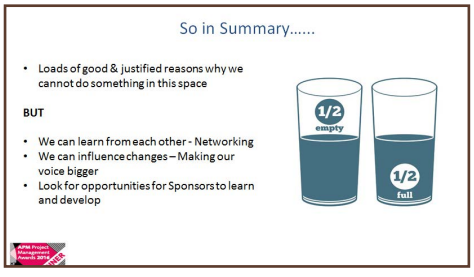
- They need coaching, but do they know it and do they want it?
- PMs need help at Royal Mail – there's a lot going on!
- Sponsorship – is it really in the too difficult pile?



APM CORPORATE MEMBERS

The APM Corporate Members Leadership Group (CMLG) has a particular focus on Sponsorship – championing a suite of products that aid the P3M profession and the sponsorship community in terms of successful delivery.

Slideset - http://citi.uk/CC/40/PH



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Great sponsorship, it won't just happen

Trevor Jones, DHL Supply Chain

SPONSOR IS THE PIVOTAL LINK

Organisational
- Organisational support
- Continuity
- Alignment

Personal
- Understanding and Competence
- Credibility and Commitment
- Engagement

COVERING MANY DIFFERENT ROLES

The sponsor has to cover many different roles, There is some guidance available but it's not used.

Conclusions of the group:
There is enough material for sponsor role

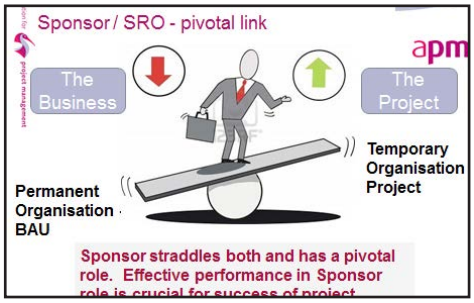
Need to influence organisations as insufficient Education / training is available

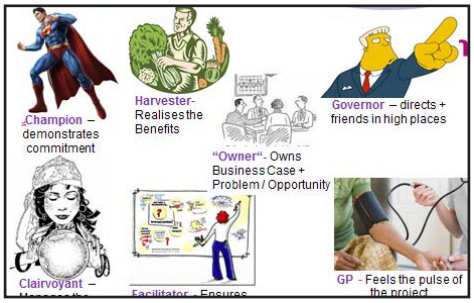
ACHIEVING CONSCIOUS CAPABILITY

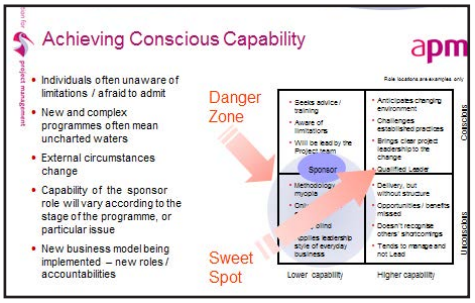
We need the APM to lead the way on this area, it does fix many of the 12 success factors!

No APM accreditation currently. We need a certification of some sort to give our senior teams once we have the portal in APM!

Slideset - http://citi.uk/CC/40/TJ







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Sponsoring change

Danny Trup, Tideway

HAVE PASSION

Danny spoke to us about his long experience in infrastructure projects, mostly focused in London. His personal passion to make Londoners' everyday lives better is what drives him to ensure that projects deliver the benefits to the end user.

FOCUS ON SUCCESS

He told us about his time tunnelling around the station at Bank without anyone knowing; extending the Jubilee Line to take in the Millennium Dome; tunnel collapse at Heathrow; the Victorian sewerage system in London that his latest project is designed to fix.

BUILDING THE NEW

He quoted Socrates:
"The secret to change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old but building on the new"

And he left us in our gardens, creating space for ourselves!
Slideset - http://citi.uk/CC/40/DT

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Online poll results

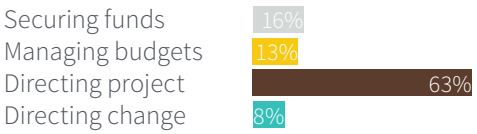
After the presentations, we asked participants to involve themselves in selecting the subjects for four workshops that we intended to use in order to guide discussion. The subject of each workshop was then chosen by majority response in our live interactive poll.

The results of our poll showed quite clearly that sponsors typically focus the majority of their attention on advising or directing a project. Whilst understandable, it was felt that if sponsors are too involved in the day-to-day operations of a project they can be pulled away from having an objective overview of the task in hand. Furthermore, they could be in danger of losing sight of the outcome and goals of a project.

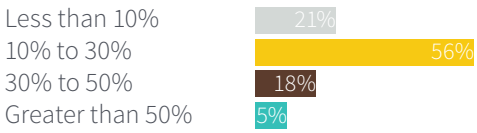
Indeed, it was pointed out that 'it's the PM's job to focus on the milestones' and too much sponsor involvement at an operational level 'could be viewed as a lack of trust in the PM to do their job effectively'. Most tellingly, it was pointed out that it can 'show that the sponsor is unclear about their role'.

Poll one

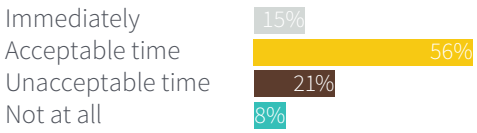
Judging by their behaviours, in your experience, where do sponsors focus the majority of their attention?



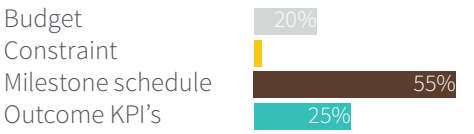
What proportion of sponsorship time is devoted to stakeholder preparation and engagement?



When faced with an escalation, do the majority of your sponsors act...



What part of regulation are sponsors most focused on?



Poll two

The results of our second question demonstrated that the amount of sponsor time devoted to stakeholder preparation and engagement is usually less than 30%. A key observation was therefore that 'decisions made during "Initiation and Planning" tend to be more acceptable than during "Doing" when the sponsor is less available'.

With regard to an acceptable time for escalations, in the first instance it was felt that 'timely decisions can prevent a snowball effect of decisions stacking up' and that escalations 'mustn't impact on the overall schedule'. It was also pointed out that 'the greater the project transparency, the shorter the acceptable period'.

Poll three

The result of the third question encouragingly demonstrated that, for our participants, the majority of sponsors acted within an acceptable time frame when faced with an escalation. Disappointingly, however, 29% of sponsors did not act within a timely manner and it was stressed that if sponsors didn't engage stakeholders 'the project is far more likely to fail'. At the very least it was felt that 'it won't get embedded so the benefits won't be realised'.

This was a highly charged question yet the overall sentiment amongst participants was that 'it's crucial to have a shared vision and a compelling story and that requires engagement' and the sponsor has to be aware of 'clear, specific stakeholder needs'.

Poll four

The last question showed that sponsors were primarily focused on the milestone schedule, outcome KPIs and budget above all other considerations. Whilst this was to be expected, it was noted that the sponsor needed to be seen as a supportive counsel and not a directive 'micro-manager'.

This can only be achieved when the sponsor is able 'to gain clarity and understanding of their role' as well as 'identify the key facts that they need to be party to'. Furthermore, it was vital that sponsors 'understood that sponsorship is an integral part of their job not separate from the day job'. In short, it is imperative to 'define and explain effective sponsor behaviour'.

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Hilary Small

Managing Consultant at CITI

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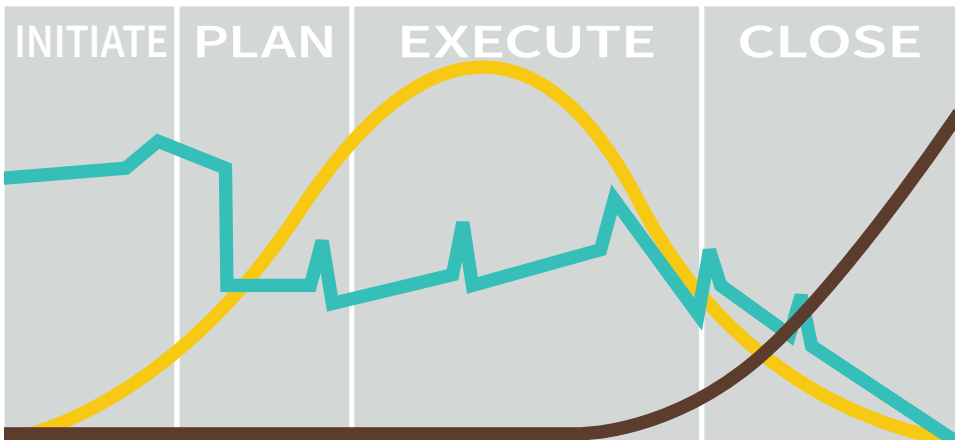
Summary of the day

At the end of an entertaining and successful day, where the subject of Sponsorship and what is good and bad about it was thoroughly discussed, we had come up with a few key points:

- Most sponsors are not very good at being sponsors
- There is no suitable accredited training available for sponsors
- Sponsors don't like being told what to do, so it's difficult to change behaviours
- Very few companies can help with Sponsorship, CITI is one of the few that can

The graph highlights where the focus of a sponsor should be, and where the focus of the project manager should be. The yellow represents the Project Effort, focusing particularly on the Execution phase of the project, and is managed by the project manager. Brown is where the sponsor should be primarily focused - on the realisation of the benefits. And lastly, the cyan line represents how much the sponsor should be involved, focusing particular attention during the Initiation and Planning phases, and then at key stages/gates during execution. The sponsor also needs to be present during Closedown to ensure benefits realisation.



Nick Dobson, who led the workshops at the event, has published a blog looking at the 'Absent Sponsor' which you can see here http://citi.uk/CC/40/AS

In summary, we would like to thank everyone who gave up their time to make the event such a success.

Our next CofEe Club event will be held at the BBC's exciting MediaCityUK complex in Manchester's Salford Quays on Thursday 9th March 2017.

The event will discuss the topic of Agile and Business Agility – how to realise benefits from being more agile and how to ensure that your organisation is best placed to benefit from Agile development approaches.

As usual the event is free of charge and places are limited. You can pre-register now at - http://citi.uk/CC/41

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Business agility

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