

# How do Programme/Project Managers bridge to gap between Strategy and Delivery?

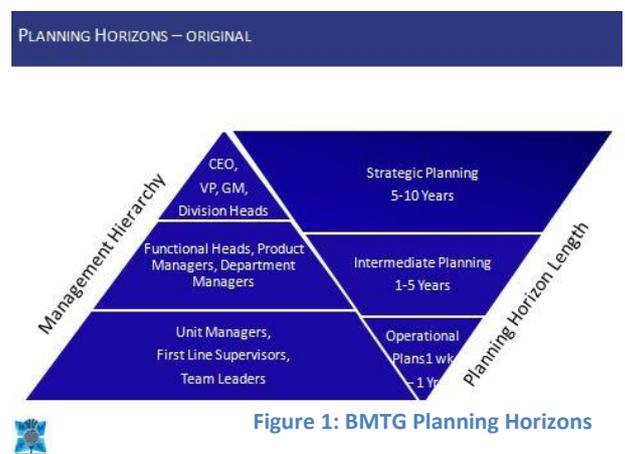
As a Programme Director I am very often asked if I am Strategy focused or Delivery focused.

My answer for many years was “30% Strategy and 70% Delivery”. It had become a standard reply that I never gave much thought to and whether it actually remained true.

When I sat back and challenged myself as to the accuracy of this statement I became more and more comfortable that my original response was as accurate today as it was when I first started out in my career.

An understanding of, and involvement in, the strategic planning horizons that drive any major project or change initiative is, in my opinion, essential to the success of any programme. Executive and Senior Management spend their time on a number of very important corporate issues; issues that lower level staff may often not be aware of. The same applies to project and Programme managers when delivering complex and highly complex Programmes.

Everyone from Programme Directors to Project Managers need to ‘bridge the gap’ between the longer term Strategic Planning and Operational Planning to drive success.



Too often I have worked with brilliant strategists who have a total inability to implement their vision. Most were exceedingly bright individuals; far smarter than me in many areas but with something innately missing in their personalities that meant nothing ever got delivered.

It took me some time to realize these individuals lacked something critical – effective leadership. Their ability to turn the strategic vision and the detailed planning that they had put into the work was sadly lacking. Without true leadership skills nothing would happen to drive success.

It was at this stage that I recognized that my place had to be spanning both the Strategy camps and the Delivery camps. Don't get me wrong, I consider some of the strategists I have worked for to be absolutely brilliant and highly intelligent, but many lacked that one trait “leadership” that would enable them to implement their vision.

Perhaps these excellent strategists would benefit from following some basic tips on project leadership. The effective Project leader should always:-

1. enable people to feel they have a real stake in the project. They should empower people to experience the vision on their own.
2. ensure clear communication about project goals, responsibility, performance, expectations and feedback.
3. remember that it is his or her actions, and not words, that set the modus operandi for their team.

4. Show enthusiasm and commitment to the project goals and express this commitment through optimism. Enthusiasm is contagious and effective leaders know it.
5. Show competence. Not necessarily the project leader's technical abilities. Project leaders should be chosen based on their ability to successfully lead others rather than on technical expertise
6. **"Be a little lazy."** An interesting perspective!
7. Develop a hardy attitude and take problems in their stride. When leaders encounter a stressful event, they should consider it interesting and feel that they can influence the outcome and if possible see it as an opportunity.
8. must understand the process and dynamics required transform a group of strangers to a single cohesive unit and to know the appropriate leadership style to use during each stage of team development.
9. must also have an understanding of the different team players styles and personalities and how to capitalise on each at the proper time, for the problem at hand
10. should encourage fresh ideas and have a fresh, creative response to here-and-now opportunities



About the Author: **Stephen Wylie**

Stephen is a Director of Business Management Training Group Ltd that has developed and delivers the Masters Certificate in Project Management (MCPM<sup>™</sup>)