



Change

Welcoming and challenging

To suggest that there is too much change in industry and that, perhaps, 80 per cent of a requirement should be fixed before implementation begins, is to miss the point.

Not every client organisation will know exactly what it wants at the start of a project. The business of such companies may change almost daily and it is impossible for them to identify an absolute requirement at the beginning of, for example, a two-year project. Flexibility and adaptability are the keys, because the clients need to be able to change their minds as they go along.



Not every client organisation will know exactly what it wants at the start of a project.

What this requires is a process that allows those involved to understand differing needs, so that appropriate changes can be made in what is being implemented.

This does not mean change for its own sake. What is different should still be challenged and questioned. What is it about the needs of the business today that suddenly requires change in what was happening in the project yesterday?

Any suggested change also needs to be put in the context of the stage the project has reached. Does the change make a difference? Can it be implemented? Will it cause a delay or even prevent some objectives being met?

Change therefore needs to be welcomed, but also challenged and questioned, to ensure that it is appropriate, beneficial and capable of delivering something of more value.



Managing expectations

Expectations of the people who have an interest in the project, but who are very much less familiar with it, need to be managed, so they understand what they are getting and why. Principally, these people are the end users – those who are actually going to own the end result when the project is completed.

For example, the traditional construction industry is poor at this essential aspect of communication, with the result that users all too often take over a facility that does not match their expectations for one or a variety of reasons. Users have probably been asked to agree a design using drawings that they don't fully understand. They may not even realise that they won't get what was initially described, because there isn't enough money in the budget.

The users have hardly been involved in the process, yet they have had to agree to what was offered and will only realise that it isn't what they asked for after completion. No-one has helped them to understand that it will be different and why it will be different. Perhaps there was a misunderstanding about the requirement, or a failure to understand why it was so important or, possibly, that the users were asking for something that they couldn't possibly have.

Frequently, misunderstandings arise because the vocabulary is different. End users do not have the experience in project delivery to describe what they are imagining and project personnel do not understand the business needs enough to realise they have heard something different.

Managing expectations is simply about helping people to understand. This starts at the very concept of the project and continues through and beyond its completion. It includes initiatives such as establishing a customer care team, which is involved in the project from the earliest point. As soon as a project is sufficiently advanced to be meaningful, end users should be invited to visit and preview what will be theirs. This process should continue throughout the project.



By managing expectations, it is almost certain that critical issues will have been raised at a point when it was possible to do something about them, or to explain why it was not appropriate to do so. There might have been elation or disappointment at the time, but there certainly won't be shock or anger when the project is completed.

Discarding valueless methods

There is no room in a FUSION project for methods and approaches from the past that fail to add value. If it is clear that a practice does not add value, it should be discarded, just as anything that is appropriate should be adopted if it does add value – whether or not the idea has been borrowed from another industry.

Understanding issues

Openness and honesty must apply in the Change process, just as everywhere else in a FUSION project. The team has to understand collectively what is different, why something has happened, and what the implications of various resulting actions will be. This is where collaboration has to work at its best, so that not even one person goes away without understanding the issues, risks and benefits – and does something different as a consequence.

Consultation

Whenever an issue of change arises, it is necessary to consult everyone who is going to be affected by the eventual solution, in order to determine what that solution should be.

Decisions should be made on a level of information commensurate with the significance of the decision. Seeking more and more views instead of deciding what to do at the appropriate time is in no-one's interest. An effective structure to ensure that decisions are made at the appropriate time is essential and should be put in place at the outset.



New ideas

New ideas should be sought throughout the entire project, by emphasising the empowerment and encouraging the creativity of the entire workforce.

Traditional construction industry methods give little opportunity for the generation or suggestion of ideas. People should be encouraged to offer ideas, whether they have been nurturing them for a long time, or thought of them five minutes earlier.

Learning from mistakes

As acknowledged in Implementation, mistakes will happen and it is important to learn from them. The culture of a FUSION project is not to engage in recrimination, or the allocation of blame, but rather to understand how the mistake happened, how to share the learnings from it and then ensure that the greatest possible benefit is derived.

Obviously, people must remain responsible for their own actions and be prepared to take the consequences for negligence or ill-judged decisions. If, on the other hand, they act in good faith, using the best information available and the result is not appropriate, they should be thanked for their effort, rather than blamed. The lessons should then be shared for everyone's benefit.

Implications for goals and objectives

Changes will have an impact on the goals and objectives of the project. It is essential to identify where the impact will be made and to ensure that all team members understand the implications of the proposed change, before it is implemented.



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Collective problem solving

Once again, the message is one of collaboration. An individual may be able to see a way of solving a problem, but nothing can be solved as effectively by one person as it can by a whole team. This is not consensus, so much as asking for opinions, taking the best ideas and then delivering a better solution.

Meeting the objectives

The project is not complete until it has satisfied its goals and objectives. For this reason, the customer care team will interface with the end users until all the outstanding issues are resolved. By adopting methods that help to manage individuals' expectations, work can be completed which is free of defects and meets the business needs at the time of completion.

As common goals and objectives exist, all parties are able to determine what changes can and cannot be incorporated towards the end of the project. Collective decisions can therefore be made about whether further change should be made, or be held until after the project has been finished. By involving end users throughout the process, changes that frequently occur at the end, because individuals are surprised by the outcomes, are virtually eliminated.