

Case Study – Major Superannuation Firm

IT Project Performance Diagnostic

- A major Superannuation firm was struggling with the delivery of their most significant project in the last 6 years which was about achieving regulatory compliance.
- In addition, the project had both strategic and operational implications for the organisation.
- The project had missed previous three deadlines and was already significantly over-budget vs. the original business case.
- The organisation had done some project reconfiguration, which meant change in management of the project, and the project team were planning to request a major increase in funding.
- Helmsman was engaged to conduct a lessons learnt review to make sure past mistakes weren't repeated in the future. We also conducted a health check of the project since the refresh, to ensure it could achieve the desired outcomes.

What were the challenges?

- **No clarity on project outcomes:** The project had become an amalgamation of 3 projects over several years. As a result, it lost focus on the outcome it was trying to achieve and the business case benefits were no longer valid.
- **More complex than needed to be:** The complexity of the project wasn't completely understood by the management and a few misinformed decisions added to the complexity, as they were outside the capability of the firm to implement: most notably, a decision to apply an Agile approach when the firm had no experience.
- **Lack of appropriate design principles:** The project planning and design were inadequate: no release plan, no strategic roll out approach, inadequate governance design and an incomplete end state operating model.

What changes were proposed?

- **Start with redefining the objectives:** The original project objectives couldn't stand a challenge of relevance and viability. The project had to redefine the objectives and financial and strategic benefits. If they still existed, the benefits had to be assessed against the additional investment.
- **Design out the delivery approach & governance:** The project needed to design a fit-for-purpose end state operating model. This include the right governance structure, outsourcing requirements, and appropriate delivery approach applied.
- **End user expectation management:** Since the end users had been constantly let down because of delays, it was imperative to manage their expectation from the outset and be transparent regarding benefits, realistic delivery date & extent of involvement.

What was achieved?

- The project was cancelled with immediate effect, as the Executive Team could no longer justify the benefits of the projects, saving the firm \$20M of additional, unnecessary investment.
- The Executive Team, which had in the past never said 'No' to any project, had a new language to debate similar issues in the future.