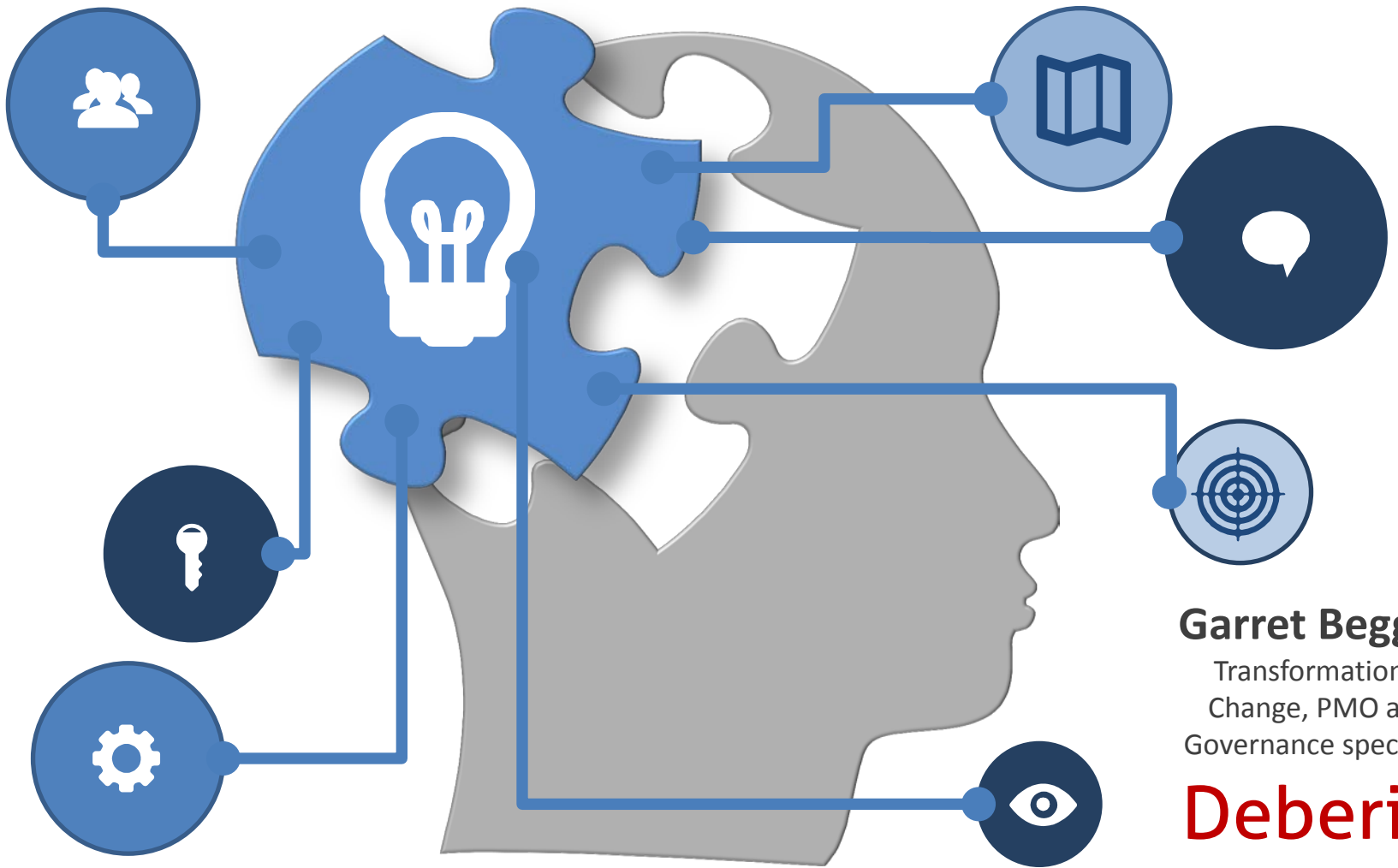


PMO
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The Learning PMO

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What use is thinking 'outside the box'...



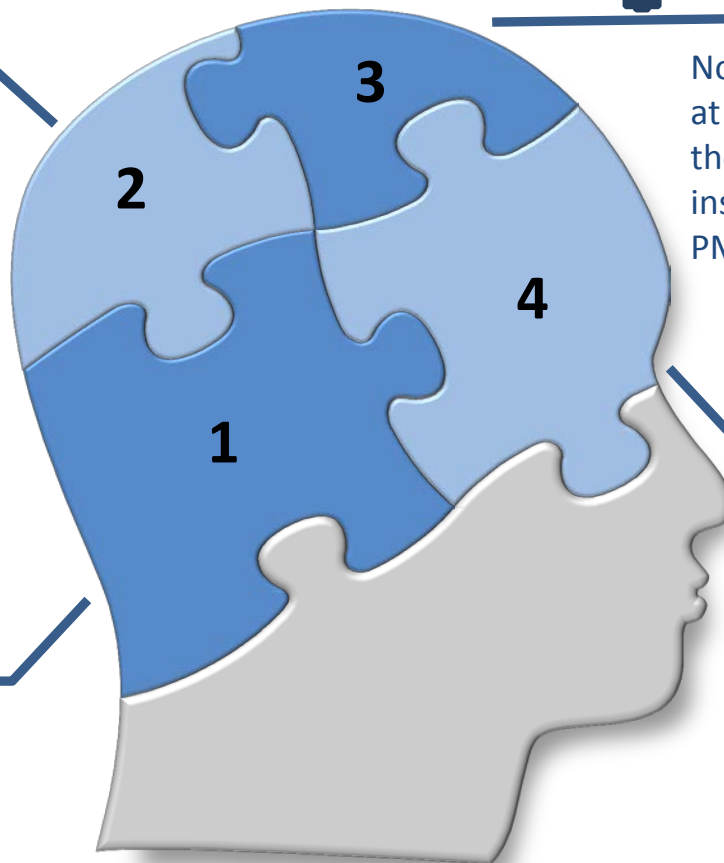
Inside the box

I used to think "can we just concentrate on finding people who can think inside the box?" – it seemed simple enough to me at a project scale, but plenty of people weren't doing it.



Outside the Box

15 years ago, every other job ad was looking for people to 'think outside the box'



The box keeps getting bigger...

Now many organisations are working at a programme or portfolio scale and there's a lot more to think about inside a bigger box. Even the best PMOs are missing chunks of it.



Operational focus

It's also a lot harder to retain focus on today's in-flight programmes and at the same time work out what's a priority to improve now, or what's OK now but will need upgrading next year.

..if we haven't really mastered 'inside the box'?

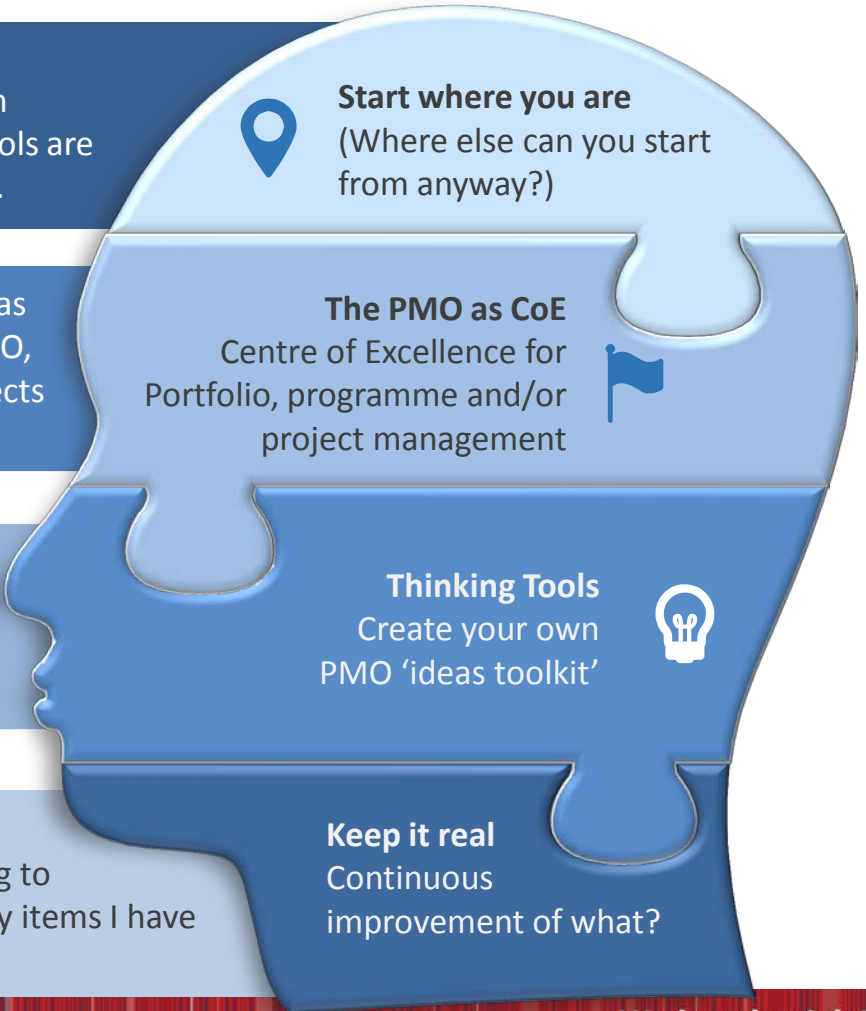
So how can we get a 'learning PMO' off the ground?

We can start where we are and build a continuous improvement loop into the way we work. This is an approach that uses common sense and its main tools are things that many PMOs already do to some extent.

This approach is most practical to the PMO acting as CoE. But since I developed it in an operational PMO, I think any PMO that will live through several projects should be able to do something along these lines.

I'm going to describe using four powerful techniques to develop and improve the framework, one reactive and three proactive.

If we are to make continuous improvement 'real', we need to know what concrete thing we are going to make better. I'm going to share a framework of key items I have found give a comprehensive foundation



Start where you are
(Where else can you start from anyway?)

The PMO as CoE
Centre of Excellence for Portfolio, programme and/or project management

Thinking Tools
Create your own PMO 'ideas toolkit'

Keep it real
Continuous improvement of what?

Lessons Learned: the 'anti-party' drudgery you have to do to be allowed the REAL party)

Afterwards who remembers either of them?

Hands up who has ever started a project or programme by digging out other people's lessons learned?

Let's look in detail at turning 'lessons learned' into 'lessons applied'

Remember, often only the PMO is going to live through project after project in the same organisation, so we are the ones who can make a difference!

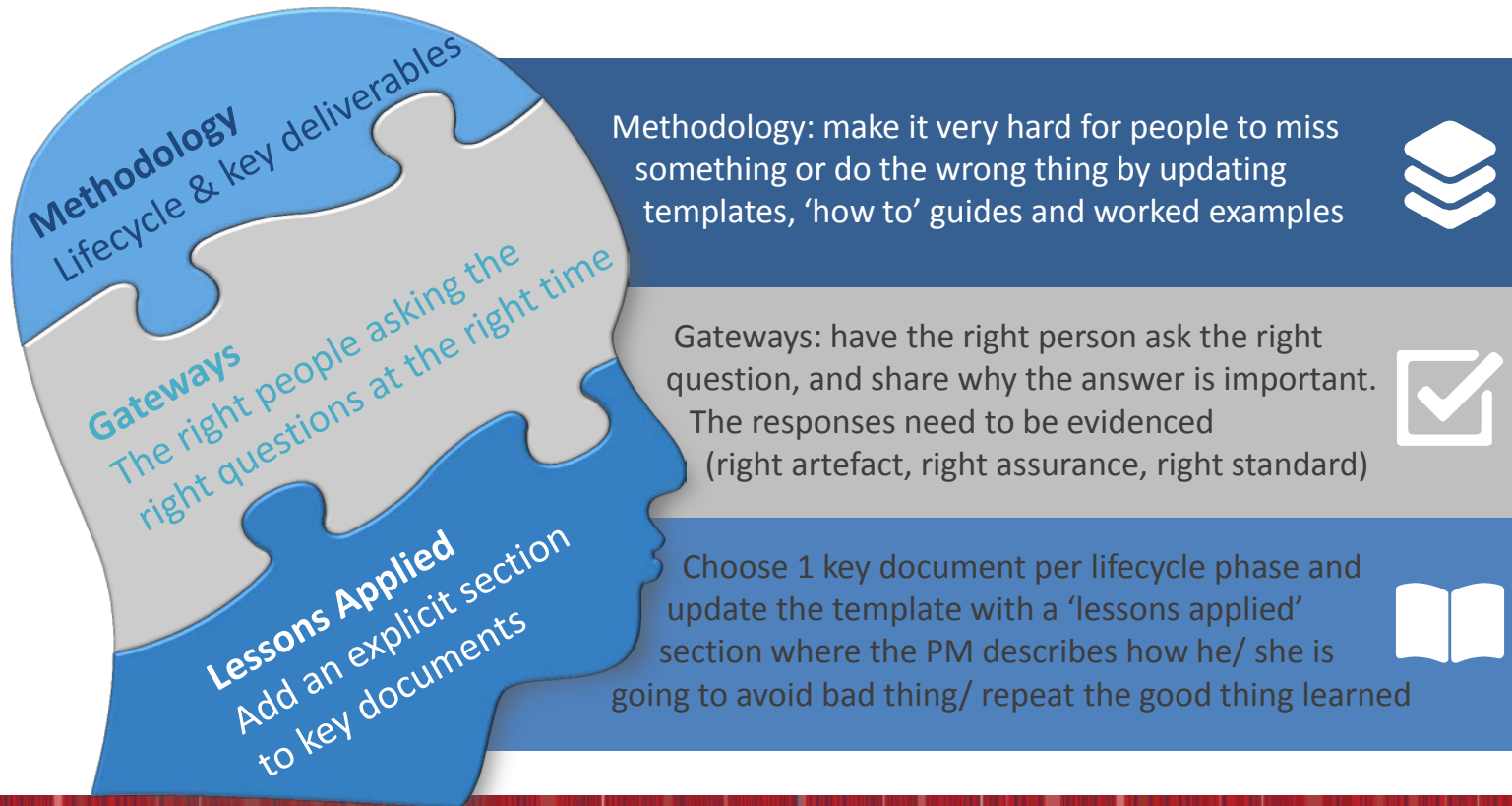
Turning 'lessons learned' into 'lessons applied'



1st Reactive Technique

Harnessing Lessons Learned

The 3 useful places to turn 'Lessons Learned' into 'Lessons Applied'



A closer look at Methodology...

1 Lifecycle phases
(even for 'agile')

2 Artefacts per phase

3 Swimlanes across
phases owned by
capability leads

4 Drive success factor
questions back as early
as you can



5 Don't be afraid to tailor
and be pragmatic

6 Include some
observations on 'sizing'

7 **Outcome:** lessons
become better templates,
'how to' process guides
& worked examples.

8 The next program is
going to have to try
harder to get it wrong!

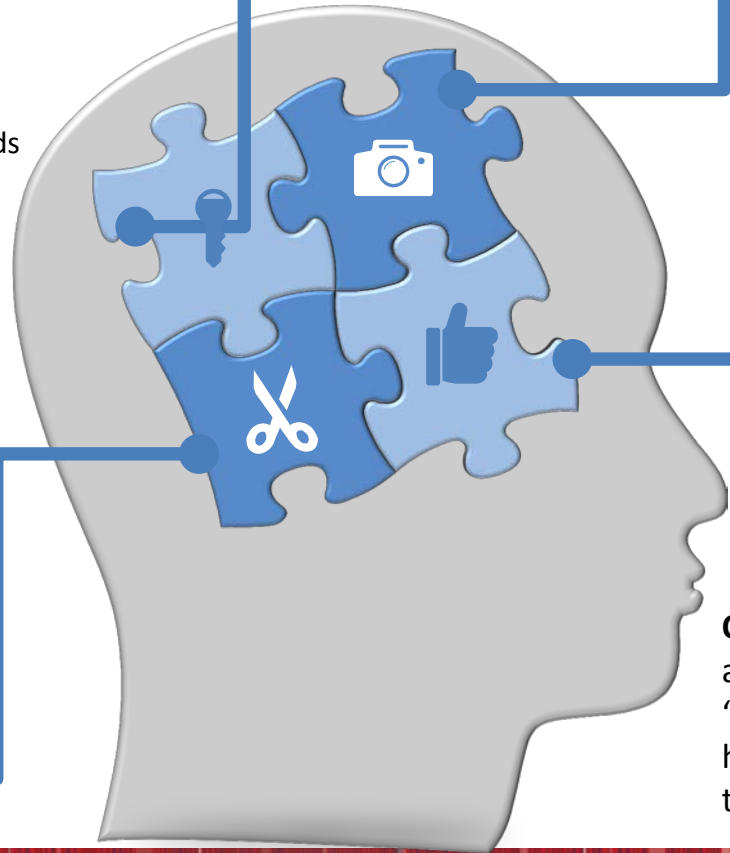
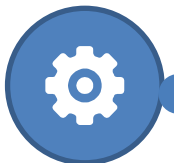


Ensure gateway questions responses are:

- evidenced by artefacts
- Meeting pre-declared standards
- Verified by the right people

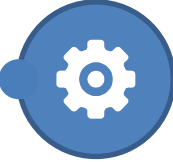
A closer look at Gateways...

Again be ready to size and customise appropriately.



The owners of capability swimlanes are best placed to decide what artefacts are to be presented evidence and what standard they must reach

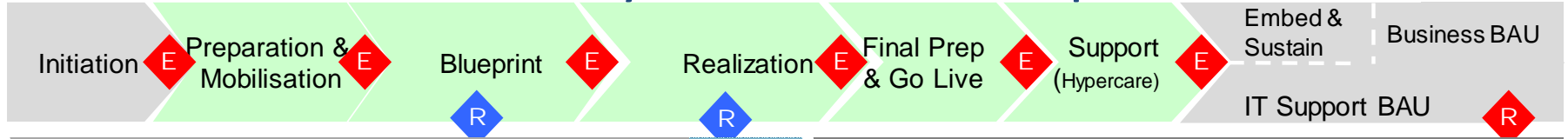
- The PMO's role is to create the 'big tent' and pull these parties in.
- We can't ourselves hope to be the experts in everything, but we can be the 'go to' group to facilitate integration.



Outcome: pointed gateway questions and the attendance of specialists who 'own' capability swimlanes make it harder to carry a 'root cause of failure' through the gate into the next phase.



Gateways 'real life' example



RG.17. Portfolio & Dependencies Management

Are dependencies with other programmes being managed?

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This question co-owned by Programme & PfMO

Ref	Aspect	Responder	Resp. name	Question for gateway	0	0	0	0
RG.17.01	TURBO Dependencies List	PMO Planner	{name}	Have we logged programme interdependencies and are we managing them appropriately?				
RG.17.02	PIMS Portfolio Mgt	Head of PMO	{name}	Have we updated PIMS with any new or changed portfolio info?				

Artefact	CRUD	Acceptance criteria
PIMS log	U	Dates for 'our' projects and 'other' projects are up to date and in alignment. This covers programme-to-programme dependencies between the SAP Programmes themselves (e.g. W2-EMC and W2-TD) as well as with external programmes
PIMS Ideas Log	U	We need to check the information reported centrally on strategic drivers, timelines and costs reflects how the programme has developed during Realisation

'Substantive' columns

- Aspect being considered
- Role responding to the question
- Person responding to the question
- Specific sub-question to be answered

'Guidance' columns

- Define artefact to be used in evidence
- CRUD –whether artefact is created, read, updated or deleted for the gate event
- Acceptance criteria define what success should look like for this artefact.

A closer look at PM's response section in key documents*...

Identify one document per program or project phase which is key to the next phase. E.g. a Design document at the end of Design phase is key to 'Build & Test' phase.

Add a 'Lessons Applied' section to that document's template. In it, the PM must address the lessons learned by previous projects from the next phase we're about to go into.

Set a review question to look at the PM's response in the phase gateway.
Has the PM adequately explained how he/she is going to avoid the 'bad thing' or repeat the 'good thing'?

Be realistic

I don't advise more than 10 lessons to address per phase. And as these points are addressed over time by Methodology or Gateway changes, remove them from the list the PM must address and replace them with the next improvement lesson bubbling up

*BTW, I am indebted to the 'Managing Benefits' guidance for this idea

Case study: controls in a manufacturing company



Internal Audit Challenge

- Design inadequate
- Testing inadequate
- Controls inadequate



PMO Response

- Swimlane: business risk added as a separate topic
- Methodology: controls artefacts and 'good enough' standards set
- Gateway: questions about reviewing redacted versions of earlier IA reports

Harnessing organisational energy: pulling IA inside the 'big tent'

Outcome: stronger controls scrutiny and better IA findings

From reactive to proactive...



1. Scan the horizon

When the CEO says “we need to focus more on process” or “we need better controls”, can the PMO get on the front foot?

2. Conduct a pre-mortem

Imagine yourself at the end of the project, and that it wasn't a success. What went wrong? If you had your time again, what would you change?

3. Build Communities of Practice

What would happen if the PMs could suggest improvements? The data team? The Business users?

Link it all together

drive improvements from all sources into our 3 key tools: methodology,

gateways, and lessons

Wednesday 6th June

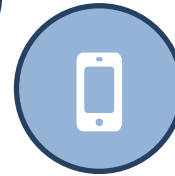
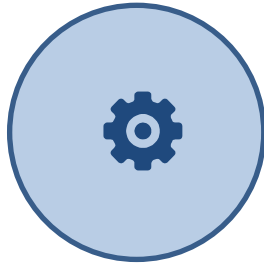
...Three powerful techniques for the learning PMO

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How many ideas
can you take away
to try out in your
PMO?

Thank you



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