

PMO: A Strategic Partner

(in Crime*)

Susie Palmer-Trew

*no actual crimes were committed

Role: Head,
Portfolio,
Transformation and
Change

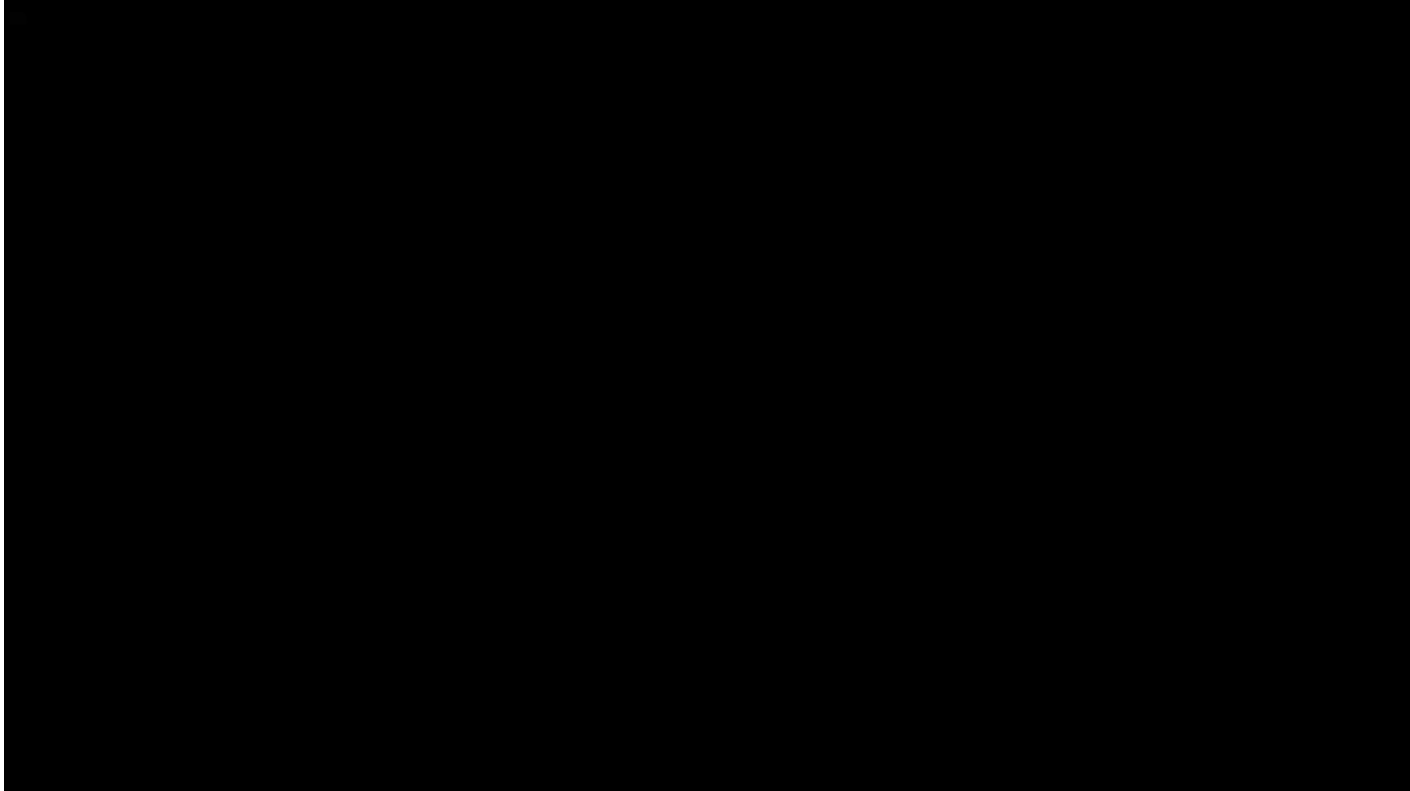
Tradecraft:
Portfolio
Management and
Portfolio Assurance

Experience:
Construction, IT
and Strategy. HE
and Commercial.

Flaws: Many and Few.
I only ever refer to
'change'. Good enough,
is the best you'll get.



The Open University exists to challenge conventional thinking and pioneer new teaching, helping our students achieve their life and career goals, it is essential we deliver the right change within the university.



Our Mountain

In Autumn 2016, we put the brakes on the volume of change we were *trying* to achieve as a University

We were **falling short** in both our ability to identify **the right changes** and to **deliver them well**



The outcome was simple:

we needed to do less and do it better

We had three areas of focus:

- Re-focus our efforts on what matters most
- Change procedure - Single approach to approval, prioritisation and assurance
- Focus on driving up value through our people and process

A New Mission

Our Aim: To establish, improve and grow the competence and confidence of the University to make the right change, in the right way

There is a risk that there is **too much change affecting some parts of the organisation** for our current level of change capability and capacity.

Change projects might deliver their agreed outputs, yet the intended **outcomes and benefits don't materialise**, or can't be evidenced.

Change initiatives **may fail to successfully engage staff** groups and other stakeholders on whom they are reliant to achieve the change.

Identify

- The challenge begins at the idea stage, if we let bad ideas gain credibility its like stopping a heard of elephants
- Know your own standards, expectations and requirements form the beginning
- Find ways to introduce early decisions and early challenges for the idea owner

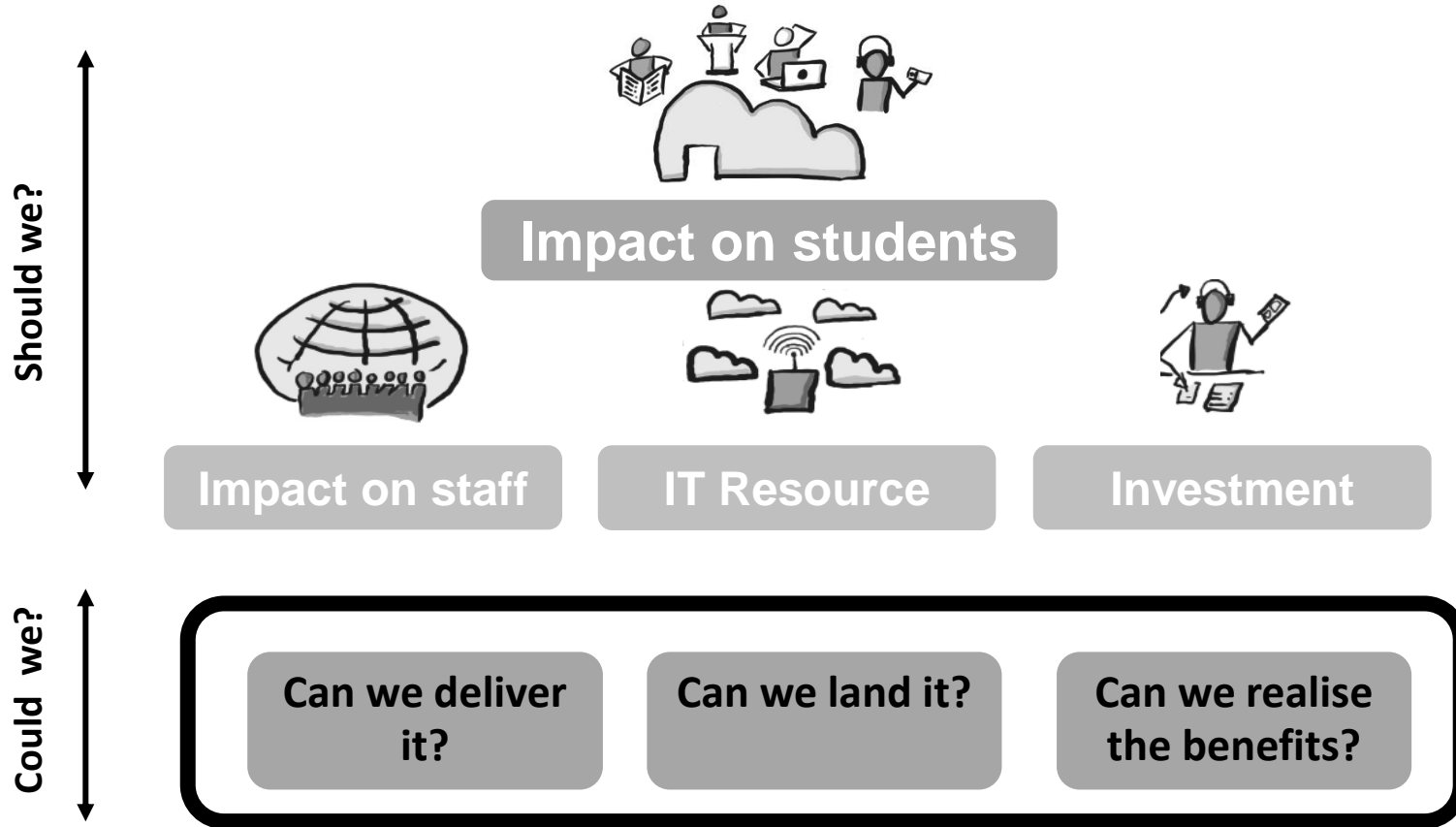
Choose

- Know where to play and how to win
- Set tolerances, expectations and standards to inform your decision making
- Ensure the decision makers understand the business strategy and ambition – without this they wont understand you portfolio

Challenge

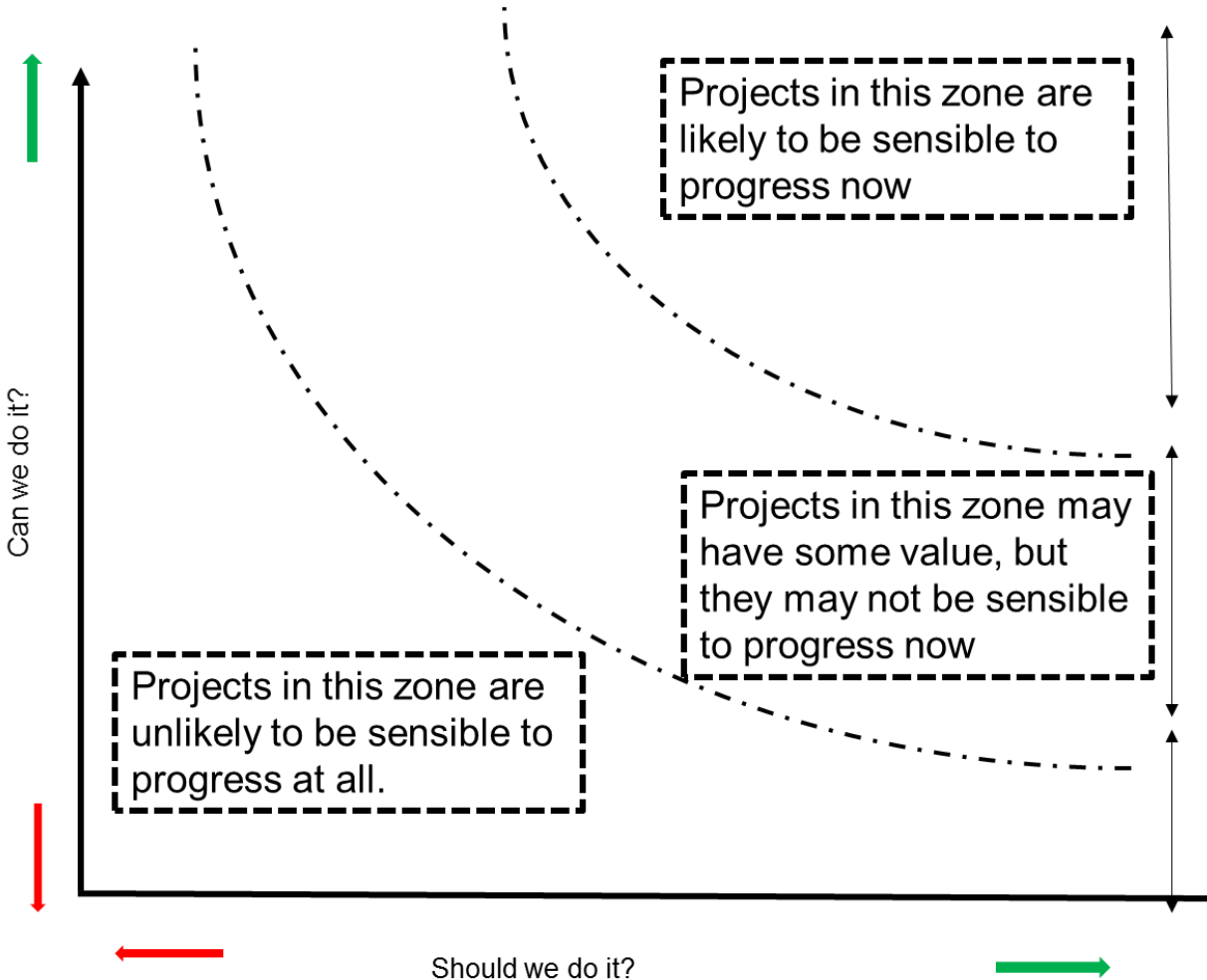
- Challenge and scrutiny are two allies
- Ask hard questions, remind everyone of the story and their individual roles in that journey
- Ensure accountability

Should we? V Could we?



A Portfolio informed PMO

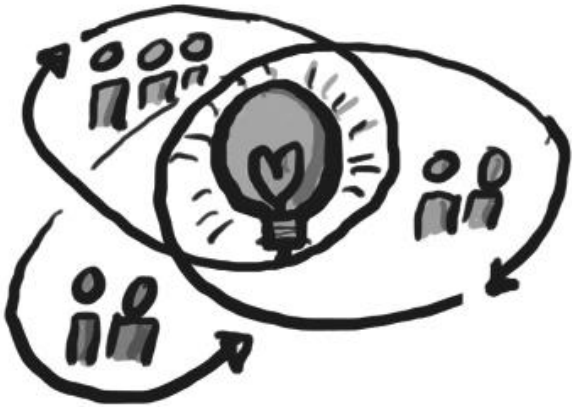
- Provide decisions makers with a view of the 'whole'
- Be confident (and consistent) in the assessment and outcomes
- Use a single and understood method of evaluation
- Enable improvement and success



APPROVAL

Accept or reject proposals inline with key criteria:

- University Strategy
- Step change in capability
- Student Focus



PRIORITISATION

- Decide when initiatives happen in relation to the wider portfolio and known dependencies.
- Retain the right to pause, stop or reprioritise.

ASSURANCE

- Provide 2nd line assurance to all projects such as healthchecks and gate reviews.
- Reporting to University Committees and External Bodies

Measure What Matters

...Not what is easy

Governing Change

Leading, enabling and shaping the direction of change activity, providing strategic control, organisation and accountability for the outcomes of the project

Managing Change

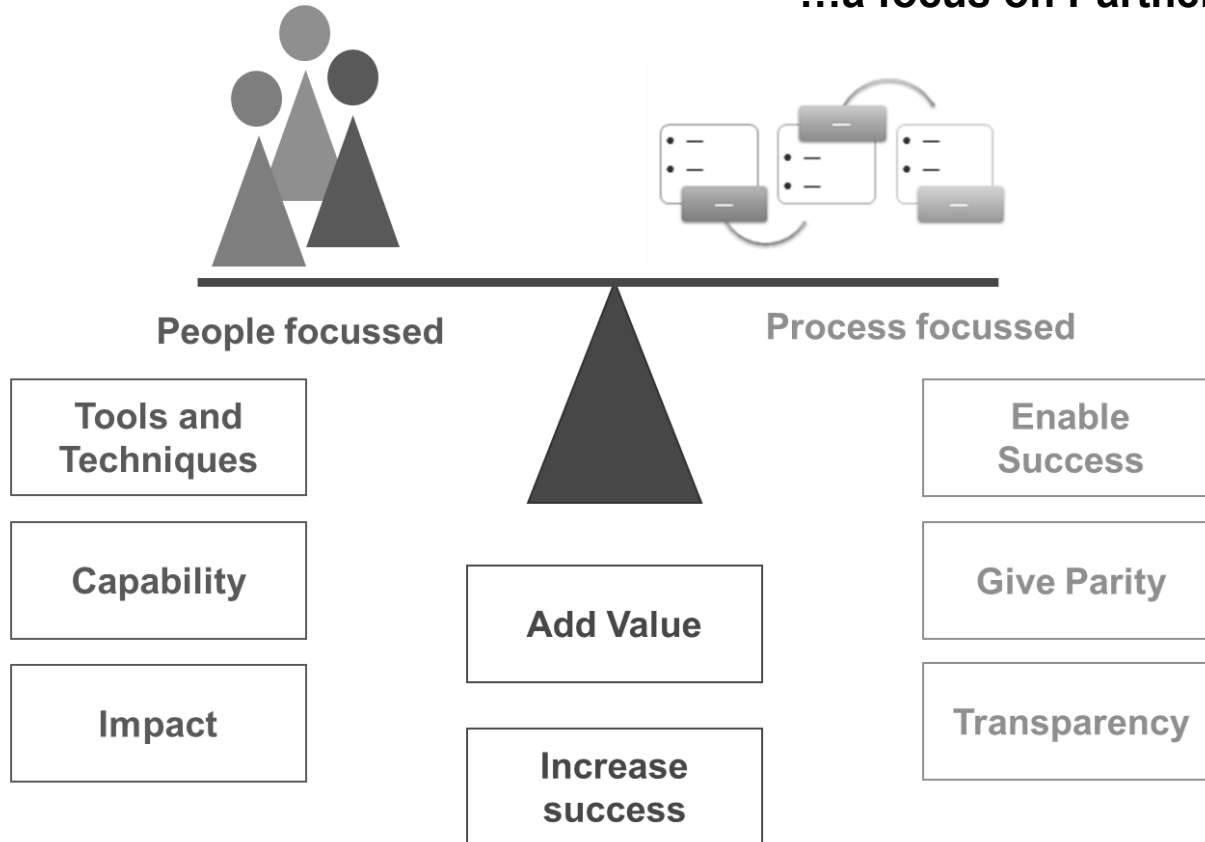
Coordination and delivery of the day-to-day change & project management activities that move the organisation from a current state to a future state.

Landing Change

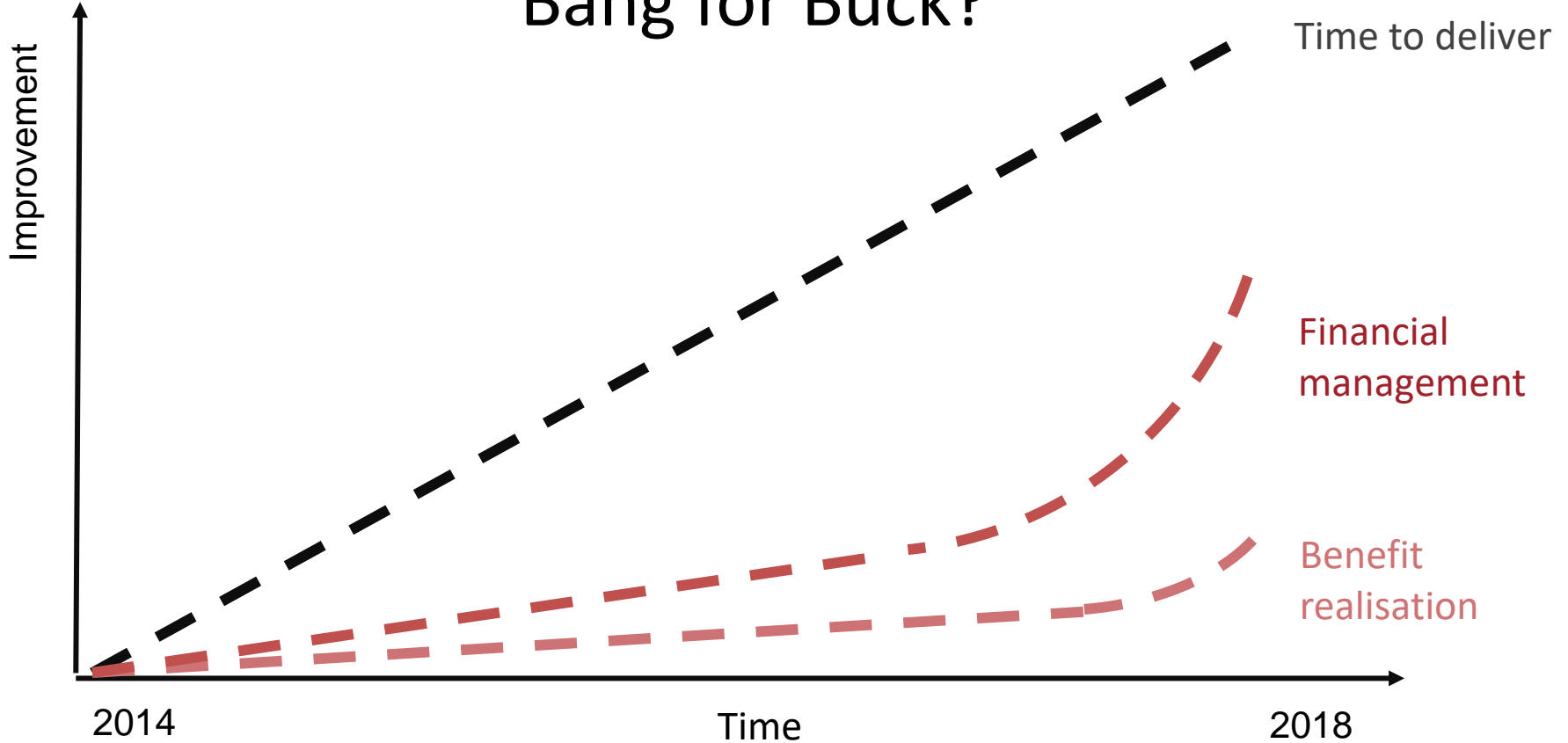
Ensuring that changes are sustainable and achieve desired benefits through effective design, stakeholder management and implementation

People & Process

...a focus on Partnership



Bang for Buck?



Our Professionalism

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Body of Knowledge				2015	2018
Competence framework			2015	2018	
Qualifications			2015	2018	
CPD			2015	2018	
Membership		2015	2018		



Our Competency

Level 1
Awareness

Level 2
Some good
practice

Level 3
Defined and
consistent

Level 4
Managed &
Quantified

Level 5
Continuous
improvement

**Governing
Change**

2015

2017

**Managing
Change**

2015

2015

**Landing
Change**

2015

2015

Science:

For a PMO to connect project execution to strategy fulfilment requires a formal and disciplined approach and infrastructure

Magic: Keep it simple.

The less complicated and more accessible your approach, the more likely people will 'get it' and will sustain its success

Magic: Culture trumps Strategy.

When a PMO becomes part of your DNA we think, believe and act in its best interests

Magic and Science: Balancing capability and capacity

You need the right brains, aptitudes and approaches to really land a PMO well. But you also need to assess your organisations ability to lead, manage and land the required changes – and for that there is no formula!

