

Benefits Led Change: Maximising Value

Peter Glynne

#### ii | Benefits Led Change: Maximising Value

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# A Practical Guide to Leading Benefits Realisation Across an Organisation

FOR MEGAN, SARAH AND JOSHUA

By Peter Glynne

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### About the Author



Peter Glynne is a Senior Management Consultant specialising in the delivery of large-scale complex change across organisations. He has over 20 year's experience in project, programme and portfolio management across Ireland and the UK. Peter has over 12 year's experience as a Big4 management consultant across Government, Healthcare, Financial Services and other sectors. He holds a Masters Degree in Project Management from University of Limerick and he is professionally qualified through the Chartered Governance Institute, UK and Ireland.

Over the last 16 year's Peter has held different leadership roles with the Ireland Chapter of PMI and the UK Association for Project Management (APM). Peter is a board member of the Ireland Chapter of Project Management Institute (PMI). He is also founder of the UK APM Specific Interest Group (SIG) in Benefits

Management and as Chair, over five years, grew the group to over 2,000 members country wide. Peter has authored many professional publications on benefits and portfolio management.

He passionately believes that Benefits Led Change is the key to organisations maximising the value from their change portfolio. Change can be complex and emotive thus Peter firmly believes that benefits should be out in front steering and driving the change; after all, **why are we doing this?** 

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# Why Should You Read This Book

Change is a constant involving all business leaders across any organisation. When it comes to change we must continually ask the question 'Why are we doing this?' This is necessary to agree, manage and deliver the very reason why the investment in change is being made in the first place.

This book takes the business leadership perspective on benefits realisation. It is written specifically for those business leaders who are struggling to ensure that beneficial change is being realised for the organisation, as intended. This goes beyond the typical project management community and is aimed at leaders across the organisation whether they are deciding strategy, managing operations, overseeing projects or all three. The book helps individuals and organisations to raise their capability in Benefits Led Change ensuring a constant value led approach.

There are many perspectives on benefits realisation with some questionable approaches being touted as good practice, without ever being proven in the field. There is much guidance available on benefits realisation and some of it goes into intricate detail on the 'how' from a project management perspective without considering organisational leadership or the wider business environment. What it doesn't consider is that benefits realisation directly impacts so many other professional groups across the organisation, all with a vested interest in realising the outcomes of change. It is just as relevant to strategy, operations management, financial management and human resources as it is to project, programme or portfolio management along with change management.

A practical approach is important, however proper consideration must be given to reasoning and pitfalls in implementing an organisation wide approach. This book will help you make sense of what is important and provide a practical approach to guide the organisation through the necessary 'hearts and minds' change to put in place effective Benefits Led Change. Benefits Led Change is not easy, but it is doable. Putting in place the necessary leadership, culture change and 'how to' approach requires an organisation wide commitment through targeted leadership, governance and assurance.

You will see a similar structure throughout the chapters. You will see how to do it, then why you do it followed by top tips from the author as a change leader. In addition, a case study 'New Corporate Office' project is used to illustrate many of the approaches throughout the Chapters.

Taking the time to plan is important. The tricky part is a new way of thinking about 'why are we doing this?' ensuring that the business case for investment in change delivers the intended benefits for the organisation. This book outlines the opportunity to raise the capability of your organisation and its leaders to maximise value from investment in change. It will help you set the direction and give you the support that you need on the journey to Benefits Led Change.

# Chapter 1

## **Benefits: Setting The Foundations For Success**

The only reason organisations undertake change is to invest in a new capability and deliver a set of benefits; otherwise, put simply, why would they invest? Every organisation invests in change with an expectation that they are buying 'value' in return. This basic premise underpins every business case for change. Nobody would argue with this principle yet the definition on what the 'value' is can be open to differing interpretation across so many different stakeholder groups. Therein lies both the challenge and the opportunity for Benefits Led Change.

Understanding what a benefit is sets the foundation for your organisation's approach to successfully managing change, much like the principle of buying a new commercial vehicle fleet. You part with money in return for a new fleet of vehicles based on a set of expectations that will deliver value to the organisation. The money is exchanged for a new capability ('the new electric fleet of vehicles') and this delivers value through reduced average journey time and reduced cost of fuel ('the operational benefits'). All organisations invest in change to buy benefits based on expectations.

#### What Is A Benefit?

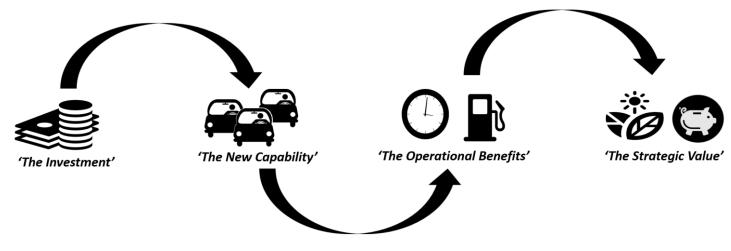


Figure 1: What is a Benefit?

- Investment: 'The money'
- New capability (or enhanced): 'The new fleet of vehicles'
- Operational benefits: reduced average journey time, reduced cost of fuel and reduced Co2 omissions
- Strategic value: contributes to Economic and Social Governance (ESG) and reduced lifecycle cost of the fleet

A definition of a benefit is "The positive and measurable impact of change on the operational performance of an organisation, contributing to one or more strategic objectives". There are certain key words in this sentence that stand-out and help value test what a benefit really is.

#### A benefit must:

- Be positive for the organisation
- Be *measurable* with a number
- Result from the impact of the planned change (through using the new capability)
- Improve the *operational performance* of an organisation
- Contribute to one or more strategic objectives of the organisation

You will have seen occasions where the agreed benefits were so loosely defined that they become unmanageable and unmeasurable. The classic one is 'improves the efficiency of the organisation' which is far too broad to be objective, measurable or manageable.

# Top Tip



When identifying benefits, it is important to differentiate between operational and strategic benefits. For example, it is easier to attribute and measure 'reduced average time to process a customer application' than 'improves the efficiency of the Customer Service Team', however one contributes to the other. Operational benefits are typically easier to categorise, quantify and measure. Strategic benefits tend to be higher level and are influenced by numerous variables, many outside of the scope of the planned change. Therefore, acknowledging the contribution to strategic benefits can be more important than trying to numerically prove causality, which can be impossible. This is the most common pitfall when identifying benefits, where the boundaries between the operational and strategic benefits become blurred and confusing, impacting subsequent ability to measure. We shall explore this in more detail in Chapter 4.

Disbenefits, the more negative consequences of change, are the opposite of a benefit and these can have a dramatic impact on the desired change. A disbenefit can range from 'additional licence costs' for software to 'negative relationships with a stakeholder group'. It is important to identify and agree these up front at an early stage. These need to be managed with the same focus to ensure that they don't operationally derail the change as it is being embedded into the organisation. You should ensure that disbenefits are identified, categorised, agreed and measured with the same rigour as benefits.

### The Importance of An Integrated Approach Across The Organisation

Setting the foundation for success requires a holistic and integrated approach covering your organisation's total set of change. Benefits can be identified and prioritised at a project or workstream level, aggregated to a programme level and further aggregated to a portfolio level. This aligned and aggregated view empowers the organisation towards Benefits Led Change centred on a single version of the truth. Top 'N' prioritisation (where 'N' is an agreed number) ensures that the organisation avoids a 'boil the ocean' approach looking at every benefit, resulting in overload and loss of confidence. Figure 2 below outlines the typical integration of benefits realisation across the organisation's change portfolio, highlighting the importance of aligned governance, prioritisation and aggregation. We will explore all of these aspects in later Chapters.

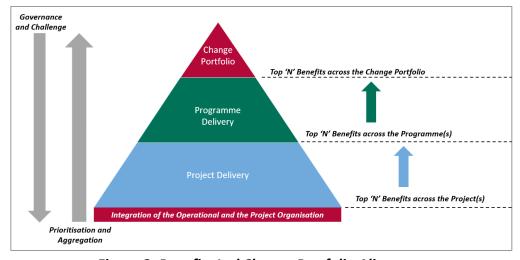


Figure 2: Benefits Led Change Portfolio Alignment

The journey towards Benefits Led Change is never overnight and requires careful consideration of the infrastructure, culture and leadership required to make it happen. The important term used time and time again across this book is 'integrated' and this single factor is critical to success. It is easy to implement a bland benefits process in the absence of leadership, buy-in and commitment. Take this approach and failure is almost a certain outcome. It is surprising how many times this mistake gets repeated, often in the flawed assumption that a defined and communicated process will drive the correct behaviours across the organisation.

### **Understanding The Opportunities for Improvement**

Many organisations have tried to implement an approach to benefits realisation and found that the results were not what they expected. Remember benefits highlight failure as well as success and this drives behaviours. For too long, benefits realisation has been seen as a challenging and emotive activity with stakeholders often shying away from being held accountable for targets that are not realistic or for factors that are not under their control. Over the years you may have seen many organisations try to get benefits realisation right and not quite succeed. This is primarily down to basic underlying issues with the approach and/or stakeholder engagement. The following 'Tell-Tale Signs' from organisations tell a story and offer insight into what can make a real difference to getting it right:

#	Tell-Tale Signs	Understanding the opportunity for improvement
1	'Benefits are too complex, and I don't get it'	<ul> <li>The approach may be too off-the-shelf and not aligned to the specific needs of the organisation</li> <li>Communication of the approach is ineffective or technical engagement is insufficient</li> <li>Poorly defined benefits leading to confusion and apathy</li> </ul>
2	'I can't measure the benefits, it's too difficult'	<ul> <li>Poorly defined benefits lacking clarity</li> <li>The organisation doesn't have the capability to measure the benefit</li> <li>No consideration given to numeric measurability</li> <li>Incorrect measurements/KPIs agreed for the benefits</li> <li>Too many detailed benefits and no prioritisation</li> <li>Benefits that are too strategic and impacted by numerous factors outside of the scope of the planned change</li> </ul>
3	'We tried it before, and it didn't work'	<ul> <li>Poor stakeholder buy-in to the approach</li> <li>Approach too process led and perceived as low value</li> <li>Fear of external scrutiny e.g. media or audit</li> <li>No call for the benefit data from senior executives</li> </ul>
4	'I'm too busy to get involved in this, too much detail and I don't have the time'	<ul> <li>Lack of willingness of benefit owners to be performance measured</li> <li>Poor engagement on the approach and its value</li> <li>Fear of external scrutiny e.g. media, audit</li> <li>Too process led without belief in the value of the approach</li> <li>Once the business case is approved, there is a culture of 'put it away and forget about it'</li> </ul>

#### 4 | Benefits Led Change: Maximising Value

Recognising the challenges up-front makes it easier for you to strategise the approach within your organisation and avoid the common pitfalls through inexperience or lack of planning. To play like a pro, there are a number of important questions relating to behaviours that you need to consider:

- Are the benefits actually bankable for the organisation?
- Are the benefits actually sustainable beyond the initial period of focus?
- Are there delays in realising the benefits through deliberate avoidance of activity?
- Is compliance with the approach to benefits malicious? e.g. hidden agendas
- Is there a detrimental impact from realising the benefits?
- Is there a lack of management focus on getting the benefits realised?

Leadership plays a critical role in driving the approach to benefits realisation both at an organisational level and a project/programme level. Put simply, without ownership benefits don't get realised. We will explore 'Leadership From the Front' in Chapter 2, highlighting the importance of getting this right within your organisation across the different levels. Without clear sponsorship and executive commitment, the goal of Benefits Led Change can be much more challenging and even elusive.

The trick to getting benefits realisation right is integration into existing ways of working across your organisation and avoiding the trap of parallel approaches that effectively compete against each other. Benefits realisation cuts across so many other functions including Strategy, Performance Management, Finance, Portfolio/Programme Management Office (PMO), Change Management, Communications and a range of other areas. In this book, we will explore what benefits convergence means for your organisation and consider the strategies for ensuring a unified approach to maximising the value from your change. Clearly, the important question to consider for any investment in change is: 'why are we doing this?'

# Chapter 2

## Leadership From the Front

The old adage 'nothing gets done without ownership' rings so true with benefits realisation and this basic principle underpins getting it right within your organisation. Without the right ownership and accountability benefits don't get realised, a simple fact. You will be familiar with CEOs and Executive Teams leading out on their change and taking ownership of strategy and delivery. However, this doesn't always play out when it comes to benefits realisation and there are many complex drivers for this. We will explore some of these in this chapter, largely through the lens of leadership and behaviours.

Whether your organisation is a private company, a public company, a government organisation or a not-forprofit, there are many factors that influence the leadership of benefits and related behaviours. These include:

- The Media
- Shareholder expectations
- Public expectations
- Staff expectations
- Customer expectations
- Government/regulatory expectations

There are also important differentiators between sectors. For example, the Government sector is generally subject to more politically motivated scrutiny/probity than the Private Sector and the Media can have a dramatic impact on public policy and the ambitions of politicians. Public companies or PLCs are driven by the market share price, and this can have a dramatic effect on leadership of benefits; timing is everything. All of this points towards the complex interdependent nature of change and benefits along with the need to get the leadership right.

There are five important factors that strongly influence the effectiveness of leadership of benefits within organisations. They are:

#### 1. CEO Leadership and Commitment

Without the commitment of the CEO or equivalent within the organisation it is significantly more difficult to embed a Benefits Led Change culture. Arguably this is the most important factor in getting things right as it drives the right response and behaviours from the rest of the leadership team. Experience has proven that sponsorship from the most senior executives will make the difference between success and failure. Ideally the CEO or equivalent will take a personal interest in making sure that the benefits are identified, agreed and managed in a timely and driven way. For this to work well, there needs to be a strong day-to-day relationship between the CEO and the team leading on the organisation's portfolio of change with a clear understanding that the benefits are the end goal. This dynamic requires a lot of confidence, trust and two-way communication.

### 2. Commitment of CxOs and Senior Managers

Again, the right commitment from the management team will embed the right culture and empower the organisation to maximise value from its change. You will be aware there are vested interests and political influences across leadership teams and this impacts the way benefits are agreed, managed and realised.

There is a strong dependency between senior level commitment and the effective governance of change. A mature and successful approach to portfolio management will drive the right commitment and behaviours. Try to find the hooks and levers that drive senior managers to support a Benefits Led Change approach. Ideally the CEO or equivalent will drive the commitment of the CxOs and the senior managers. Ownership and commitment go hand-in-hand.

#### **Top Tip**



Prioritisation is critical to effective leadership and ownership of benefits. A typical change portfolio will result in a significant number of benefits across the organisation. Not all can be led and managed to the same standard and level of detail. Trying to 'boil the ocean' is a one-way path to failure. A top 'N' approach (where N is an agreed number) at project, programme and portfolio level will provide alignment to business strategy focusing on the highest priority benefits aggregated across the organisation. We will cover prioritisation in more detail in Chapter 4.

### 3. Integrated Governance For Change and Operational Leadership

It is important to ensure that the board or governance group setting operational priorities is also setting the priorities for the change agenda. This is critical to portfolio management of change and a benefits driven leadership culture. Whilst this is a core objective of successful portfolio management it also ensures that the benefits from delivering change stay aligned to the operational running of the business. After all, change is delivered to improve the operations of the organisation and deliver strategic value. It is surprising how many organisations have the right intentions to integrate and talk the talk however still continue to operate siloed change and operational governance. Think about the importance of benefits convergence and the need to bring together the various teams across the organisation that have a vested interest in ensuring that the benefits get realised. This includes operational performance management, finance, strategy, the PMO, communications, change management and others. Where there is siloed separation of activity relating to benefits, parallel approaches compete and eventually all but one fades away. Benefits Convergence is explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

#### 4. Early stakeholder engagement (internal and external)

Imagine, you are the Transformation Director on a large Government programme. Would you feel comfortable engaging the Trade Unions early on the change impacting their members when it may or may not be well received? Effective communications to support a benefits driven leadership culture is critical; clarity and timing is everything. Benefits are realised by and for stakeholders. Without their timely involvement and commitment, you are operating in an isolated environment. Stakeholder engagement on the benefits early in the change lifecycle significantly increases commitment to the approach and ultimately to realisation of the benefits. It is important to identify the benefits early in the conceptual phase of a project with appropriate and timely stakeholder consultation. This arguably should be the first priority when the change is being strategized, driving the business case and the rationale for investment. Not every organisation puts this into practice and too often it is unintentionally approached retrospectively. Often there is a fear of engaging stakeholders too early for political or risk related reasons; timing is everything. Managers sometimes have a difficult time accepting that early engagement on the benefits with critical stakeholders is the correct thing to do. If you are an expert change leader or a seasoned communications professional, the importance of early and timely engagement cannot be overstated.

### 5. Business As Usual 'Operational' Ownership of Benefits

When identifying the ownership of individual benefits use a two-tier approach. Each benefit should have an owner at board/executive level, typically someone who has strategic responsibility for the business area in focus. There should also be a day-to-day business owner who will take operational responsibility for ensuring that the benefit is realised. Typically, these roles fall into the operational side of the organisation, not the project side. Benefits should never be owned by a project team with a temporary focus on delivery. Ultimately, the question of ownership can come down to timing as project/programme teams who deliver are not always around for long beyond the go-live and in a position to own the benefits. If you think about where is the value in having benefit owners who will not be around when the change is live and operational? For change programmes with long lead in time to realising the benefits, continuity of ownership needs to be carefully considered when leadership churn is a constant factor. Average executive level tenure can be shorter than some change programmes.

Top Tip



In the early stage of implementing Benefits Led Change it is important to pilot the approach by taking a project or programme which is a strong contender and where there is already an effective working relationship. This proves the value to the wider organisation through targeted engagement and a quick win focus. This requires investment, time and patience to ensure that the approach hits the mark and wins over advocates to influence the wider organisation. Get it wrong and you will experience the opposite.

## Chapter 3

## Benefits Convergence across the Organisation: One Approach

There are several professional functions, supporting the Executive team, across any organisation that has a vested interest in the realisation of the benefits from investment in change. You will be familiar with the intersection between finance and the delivery of change along with the importance of targeted communications to embed the end outcome. Typically, the Portfolio/Programme Management Office (PMO) takes oversight of all change within their domain and performance management regularly looks at how the organisation is doing operationally against the agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or metrics. The common thread that weaves all of this together is the delivery of change to improve the operational performance of the organisation. This has a familiar ring to it with the definition of a benefit in Chapter 1.

The important point is that each of these overlapping functions within the organisation plays a role in ensuring that change delivers the expected value. The challenge, as happens in many organisations, is that each function approaches this in a siloed way against the requirements of their specific domain and with their own methods and professional lens. The opportunity is to align all of this activity to bring it together in a more connected value led way for the organisation. Without this benefits convergence, experience has proven that parallel approaches emerge and operate in a siloed way until eventually one or all become irrelevant or obsolete.



Figure 3: Benefits Convergence: One Approach

We will explore benefits convergence across these functions in more detail in the rest of this chapter.

### 1. Strategy

The typical strategy function in any organisation will develop and review the strategy or sub strategies, align business planning within individual business areas and assess strategic fit to make "continue/discontinue" decisions. The function will vary from organisation to organisation ranging from sitting within the CEO's office to being a separate business area in its own right to being part of a policy division, as often seen in Government. The starting point for any change journey is strategy and whilst this sounds like a cliché, it is surprising how many organisations fail to align this critical area across end-to-end delivery. Other agendas often get in the way of a clear line of sight.

### Top Tip



Pinpointing the contribution of change to achievement of organisation strategy is a key element of Benefits Led Change leadership. The benefits from delivering the organisation's portfolio of change are essential to showcase contribution to achieving strategy. We will explore Benefits Value Mapping in Chapter 4 which visualises the contribution of Operational Benefits to achievement of Strategic Value.

Knowing what good looks like is a step towards the right approach. The teams scoping and delivering change need to be clear on understanding the detail of the organisation's and/or business area's strategy. Benefits identification and prioritization needs to be carefully aligned to the organisation's strategy. There needs to be a clear and consistent line of sight between strategy and change. Without this the flow of logic from what we want to achieve to what we are achieving; visibility can be clouded in fog. There also needs to be a review of benefits realisation aligned to the review of strategy. You will see that there are many elements of the benefits lifecycle that intersect with strategy and far too often organisations approach this in a loose or disconnected way, not being clear on the beneficial value from their portfolio of change. After all, 'why are we doing this?'

### 2. Portfolio/Programme Management Office (PMO)

A PMO is worth its weight in gold when it brings sustainable value to an organisation or a programme, however not all do all of the time. How many times have you seen benefits identified and led by a PMO only to become irrelevant or superseded by another approach elsewhere in the organisation?

The factors that can make a real difference to a successful PMO are strong leadership, accuracy, targeted digital technology and effective capability development for its change community. There is a critical role for the PMO across benefits realisation from providing oversight of the organisation's change portfolio to assessing programme business cases to provide regular reporting aligned to governance. There is also the priority to ensure that the organisation uses a consistent or aligned approach to benefits realisation making it possible to aggregate the portfolio of benefits easily, based on agreed prioritisation. We will explore this in more detail in Chapter 5. In addition, the PMO has a critical assurance role in ensuring that benefits plans are robust and managed ensuring that corrective action is taken, when necessary. So much of this is closely related to the governance of change and the wider operational organisation.

### Top Tip



A transparent and accurate view of the prioritised portfolio of benefits across the organisation or programme is critical. Alignment of the approach across projects and programmes is important to ensuring that the view is both transparent and accurate. The confidence of the Executive team is the measure of success that all PMOs should strive for.

A strong PMO will quality assure the benefits providing a consistent view across the change portfolio. It will provide regular targeted reporting on progress towards achievement of benefits realisation thereby empowering the Executive team to set the direction and take ownership. The important factor is a clear line of sight from the delivery of change to improvement in the organisation's business performance. After all, organisations strive to deliver change in a connected value led way.

### 3. Operational Performance Management

Every organisation, large or small operates an annual business plan aligned to a set of corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure and manage progress. You will be familiar with monthly reporting cycles typically aligned to financial reporting periods along with the importance of annual business planning and KPI alignment. Achievement doesn't happen by itself and requires commitment, monitoring and targeted intervention. Even more important is oversight of action plans to address organisational performance issues including the elements delivered through change. All of this is critical to the effective operational leadership and corporate governance of an organisation yet not always approached in an integrated way.

Change is a constant element of operational performance management yet there isn't always a crossover between benefits realisation and managing operational performance. Therein lies a significant challenge where the same or similar KPIs are being used to manage operations and manage benefits realisation, yet far too often they operate in silos led by unconnected teams. Invariably, after a period one of the approaches falls away and becomes irrelevant; rarely is it operational performance management.

Top Tip



Alignment of the organisation's agreed set of KPIs with benefits measurement across the change portfolio and 'not reinventing the wheel' is important. Using the same or similar KPIs for operational performance management and benefits realisation minimises the risk of creating separate industries where duplication of effort and frustration can be common play. Keeping it simple with maximum re-use of KPIs is an objective that every organisation should strive for.

The integration of operational performance management and benefits realisation reporting is critical to getting it right. Whilst there may be multiple teams involved, integration is the way, and there needs to be confidence in not duplicating work. In addition, clear action to address performance challenges must take account of the operational and change drivers. One without the other is operating in the dark only understanding part of the big picture.

#### 4. Financial Management

The financial function in any organisation typically oversees organisation budgeting and forecasting, management accounting and reporting along with oversight of budgetary action plans. Often, there is less emphasis on the impact of change on the operational financial management of the organisation. Many private sector organisations top slice operational budgets in advance based on high level yet tested assumptions around cost reduction. Each individual manager is often left to understand how they can incorporate the ask into their operational budgets, some non-complex cost elimination techniques. This is a well-versed activity across many Private Sector organisations and increasingly across the Public Sector, albeit with the impact of political probity.

Projects and programmes typically have a defined business case that specifies the value from the investment in new capabilities for the organisation e.g. the change. There is an established maturity in financial management of projects and programmes that many organisations have been perfecting for years. Tools exist such as Earned Value Analysis to indicate where a project or programme is against its planned schedule and cost forecast.

Top Tip



The objective is a clear line of sight from organisational budgets to benefits realisation cost targets. Easier said than done as not all cost reduction comes through projects and programmes; some originates from a dictated top slicing of budgets. There is always a great opportunity to ensure that the agreed financial benefits flow directly through to the operational financial budgets in the relevant financial year. This requires joined up working between the Finance team and those leading on the organisation's change.

There are many levers to understand what drives the right results. Integrated financial management and benefits realisation cost planning is the important one. This includes clear action plans that take account of financials across operations and the change portfolio. There also needs to be confidence in not duplicating work across Finance, the PMO, Performance Management and other teams.

#### 5. Communications

The Communications, Public Relations or Media team in any organisation typically oversee internal and external communications to ensure that the right messages get to the right people at the right time. It oversees the branding and messaging for specific change project or programmes, messaging to stakeholders on the change that delivers value to them and assessing the effectiveness of communications/media campaigns.

The trick to engaging stakeholders successfully is communicate, communicate and communicate. The trick to engage stakeholders successfully on the right content is benefits, benefits. The two go hand in hand yet too often benefits are seen as technical, detailed and not necessarily in the right format to engage the right stakeholders. Communications and benefits realisation can operate in loosely connected silos without bringing together the synergy from the sum of the parts.

Top Tip



Timely and high impact communications are a great opportunity for stakeholders to truly understand the value that the benefits bring to them. Also such communications support the organisation to deliver on its change priorities. Bringing the benefits to life for stakeholders at the right time is critical to achieving understanding, acceptance, commitment and follow through. Communications and the project/programme or the PMO must work hand-in-hand to make this happen.

Good comes in many forms including communications planning around the value that the project/programme is actually delivering. Media campaigns should be closely aligned to the actual benefits being delivered. Targeted communications to drive value from the benefits require intervention to ensure that they are consistent and purposeful. You will explore this in more detail in Chapter 7.

#### 6. Change Management

Change management arguably has one of the most critical roles to play in the realisation of benefits. When you think about it, change management teams focus a lot of their effort on embedding the desired change within the organisation following delivery of a new capability. Indeed, in some organisations the change management team take responsibility for oversight of benefits realisation in their domain. So what do organisations want from their change management teams? The short answer is that they want a clear vision, effective communication and engagement with stakeholders along with targeted support for embedding the change. They also want the ability to review progress and analyse results. This is why there is such a strong link between change management and benefits realisation. The reality in some organisations is that the hard metric driven world of benefits realisation and the softer more behavioural world of change management don't always align. The opportunity for synergy needs to be maximised for the organisation to gain. Benefits convergence provides the platform for change management, communications and the other teams across the organisation working on Benefits Led Change to come together and align around a single common approach. This is easier said than done however the end result is worth taking the time to get the teams to 'gel'.

### **Making Benefits Count**

Successful alignment of the typical functions around Benefits Led Change in any organisation is not an easy undertaking as there are other priorities, politics and control factors that come into play. It sounds easy and straightforward however if it was, everybody would be a master of It. The important element is a coordinated and integrated approach that reduces duplication, brings synergy and overall is more effective at realisation of the benefits from investment in change. After all, 'why are we doing this?'.

# Chapter 4

### Benefits Led Change: Identification and Prioritisation

The approach to benefits driven leadership needs to be value led and one that aligns closely with operational and change governance across the organisation. Driving the right approach across the organisation is so much easier to achieve with the buy-in and support of the executive leadership team. It needs be integrated across the various corporate functions that have a vested interest in the outcomes of change, as outlined in Chapter 3. Not an easy task to do and one that requires a skilled diplomat that transcends the boundaries of the relevant functional teams.

The Benefits Wheel diagram below illustrates the typical lifecycle of benefits on a project or a programme with a six-step model. You will explore each step in the remainder of this chapter along with Chapter 5.

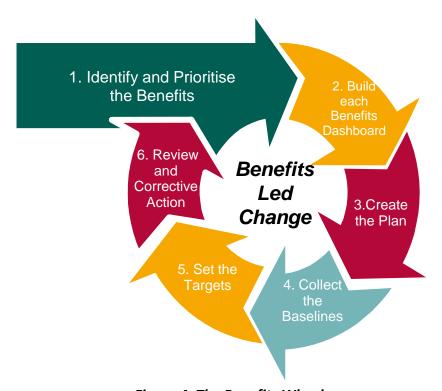


Figure 4: The Benefits Wheel

### Step 1: Identify and Prioritise the Benefits

The early-stage benefits of any project or programme should be identified up-front before the decision to invest in change is made. This provides a sense check of the rationale for the change and one which helps shape the business case and ultimately the decision to invest. There are several popular methods for identifying benefits in a logical and structured way, some better than others. Unfortunately, some approaches are so complex that they are only legible to the author. The important point is that the approach to identifying benefits supports effective stakeholder engagement and consensus ensuring that the correct ones are agreed. This is best achieved through multiple workshops where iterations of the visual model are considered, discussed and agreed. A 'dark room' approach where the benefits are developed and issued out to key stakeholders after being finalised is a perfect recipe for lack of stakeholder buy-in and commitment. It is surprising how often this happens with unintended consequences. In the next section, we are going to look at Benefits Value Mapping and how it can be successfully used to identify the benefits.



Avoid using a visual benefits modelling technique that is overly complex with too many layers and is difficult to communicate. There are many approaches that are touted as good practice yet fail to meaningfully engage. There is no badge of honour in developing a visual that nobody else can easily read and understand.

### Introduction To Benefits Value Mapping

Benefits Value Mapping, in simple terms, paints a picture of the benefits of the change from a project or programme. It introduces a structured approach to identifying the benefits through visual mapping illustrating the logic and the connections in simple to understand business language. Most importantly, it is a visual poster to support stakeholder engagement, understanding and buy-in.

It is important to get the approach right from the start as if rushed into and not fully thought through it can become a complex visual which can be difficult to understand and communicate. The model is intended to be developed through collaborative workshopping and consultation, with relevant stakeholders, typically taking multiple iterations to get right. The example below presents an extract from a Benefits Value Map for a 'New Corporate Office' project. You will see this example project used across the book to illustrate the value of Benefits Led Change.

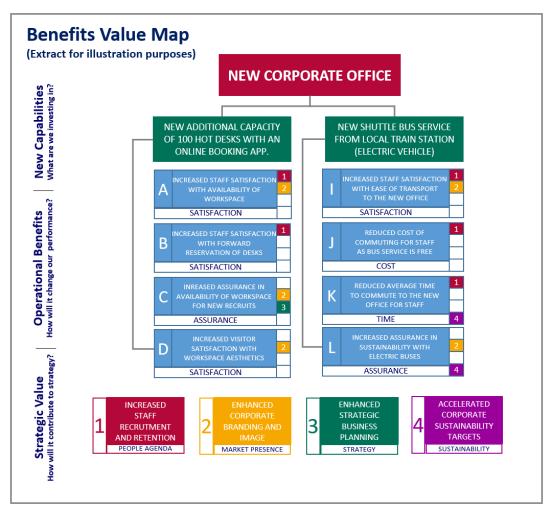


Figure 5: Example Benefits Value Map

Typically a Benefits Value Map will have seven or eight new capabilities and up to 30 Operational Benefits with seven or eight items of Strategic Value. The model can be developed for a project, a programme or a portfolio. Typically Benefits Value Maps are aggregated from a project level to produce a summary model at a programme or portfolio level using a top 'N' benefits approach. There is an example aggregated Benefits Value Map at the end of this chapter.

# Overview Of How To Read The Benefits Value Map

The Benefits Value Map is a logical structured approach as illustrated in the diagram below. This example highlights an extract from a wider Benefits Value Map with a supporting narrative to explain the approach.

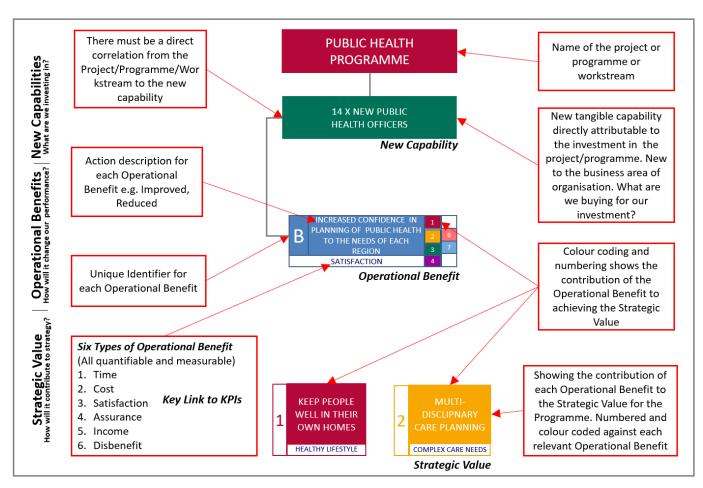


Figure 6: How to Read A Benefits Value Map

#### Top Tip



When building the Benefits Value Map the logic flows from top to bottom. Start with identifying the New Capabilities, ask the six Operational Benefit questions of each capability and finally show the contribution of the Operational Benefit to the individual items of Strategic Value using the colour coding. This ensures a clear and simple logic and avoids the vagueness that often is associated when starting with the Strategic Value items. Try building it bottom up from the Strategic Value and you will quickly realise how much more difficult it is to work out the logic. It helps to identify the Strategic Value items up front however don't start with them.

The three basic building blocks of the Benefits Value Map are:

#	Category/Heading	Understanding What It Is
1	New Capabilities What are we investing in?	New tangible (or enhanced) capabilities that are being implemented through the project or programme e.g. specifically brought about from the change. These are new capabilities to the organisation; they are milestone based and there is clear ownership of delivery. In simple terms, they can be the workstreams or sub-projects.
	Inputs Required	The list of workstreams or sub-projects. What are the high-level deliverables/new capabilities?
2	Operational Benefits  How will it change our performance?	These are the impact on the operational performance of the organisation from the implementation of the new capability. These operational benefits are based on measurable performance indicators that align to the organisation's set of metrics. They are measured through one of six different types of operational benefit which are all measurable with a number. This will be covered in more detail later in this chapter.
	Inputs Required	The Operational KPIs from the organisation or business area that you are looking to improve. Which KPIs is the change looking to improve? Which KPIs are most important to the senior management team?
3	Strategic Value  How will it contribute to strategy?	The overall strategic value that the organisation derives from realising the operational benefit(s). A set of operational benefits will deliver a set of one or more tangible items of strategic value. In simple terms, this is what the organisation's executive team will expect from the change.
	Inputs Required	The organisation or business area strategy document that you are looking to align to. What are the high-level targets to achieve?

In the Benefits Value Map example above, the logic flows from the New Capabilities which drive the Operational Benefits which in turn contribute to the Strategic Value. Measurability typically sits with the Operational Benefits whilst the higher-level Strategic Value items will be influenced by numerous variable factors that impact measurement. For this reason, it is not suggested to measure Strategic Value just highlight the contribution from the Operational Benefits using colour coding. This is why many approaches to benefits realisation come unstuck as they attempt to measure performance indicators that are influenced by numerous factors and variables that make measurement meaningless. For example, try measuring the new capability from a project on the 'efficiency of the organisation' and making it meaningful.

The level of the New Capabilities will dictate the detail of the Operational Benefits. If the New Capabilities are too low-level there will be too many detailed Operational Benefits. If they are too high level, there will be too much vagueness in the model. Getting the level of the New Capabilities right is worth investing the time to avoid future re-work.

The time taken with stakeholders to develop the Benefits Value Map is beneficial as it drives important discussions relating to scope, risk and dependencies that need to be considered at the outset of a project. Done well the engagement from developing a Benefits Value Map will increase understanding, secure buy-in and communicate the value in everyday business language.

### **Building Out the Operational Benefits**

Once the New Capabilities have been identified, the Operational Benefits can be considered. For each New Capability, ask each of six questions below in turn to identify potential Operational Benefits e.g. will it save time and for whom? Will it save cost and why? Which stakeholders will be happier as a result? The answer to each relevant question may result in an Operational Benefit e.g. reduced average commute time. Going through each New Capability in sequence will result in building out the Operational Benefits in a structured and carefully considered way.

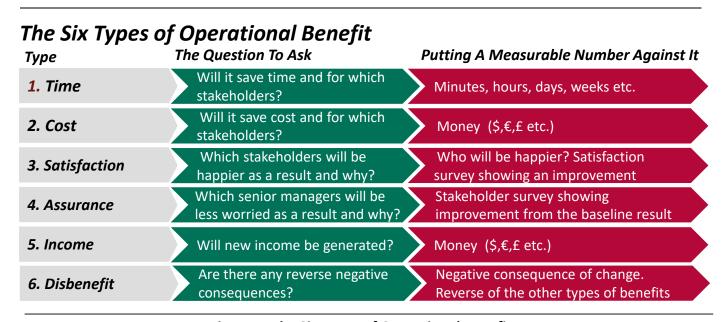


Figure 7: The Six Types of Operational Benefit

When identifying a new Operational Benefit it typically starts with an action word e.g. Improved, Reduced, Increased. This is important as it provides a clear narrative for the benefit; otherwise the rationale for it may not be easily remembered at a future date.

### Top Tip



The materiality of the Operational Benefit is important. For example, a new system that saves 10 mins per day for each admin. staff member is not material and their work will expand to fill this minimal saving anyway. Even if the 10 min saving was aggregated across 1,000 staff it will still not be realised. For this reason, the benefit needs to be material e.g. make a significant difference to be included in the mix. Capacity creation can only be translated into financial benefits when it directly reduces headcount.

In the example below we consider the New Capability "New Shuttle Bus Service from Local Train Station", and we ask the question will it save cost and for which stakeholders. Clearly, we have an Operational Benefit as a new free bus service is a cost saving to the staff. This is illustrated below in Operational Benefit J.



Figure 8: Aligning New Capabilities To Operational Benefits

Typically each New Capability will result in seven or eight Operational Benefits. The entire Benefits Value Map is driven around identifying the right level of New Capabilities. You need to take the time to get it right. If you find that you are identifying too many or significantly less Operational Benefits, it is likely that the New Capabilities are too detailed or too vague; this is a common pitfall. Ideally, there should be no more than 30 Operational Benefits and whilst this is not an absolute rule it is a helpful gauge in getting the right level of detail. If there are fewer than ten Operational Benefits, it is important to recheck that you have the New Capabilities defined at the correct level.

#### Top Tip



Stick to the six types of Operational Benefit. With this approach there is a guaranteed way of putting a number on each Operational Benefit. Without it you will lose clarity and consistency and may find it considerably more difficult to measure the benefits.

# **Building Out the Strategic Value**

Ideally, the Strategic Value items are directly taken from the relevant organisation or business area strategy. What are the key strategic targets relevant to the project or programme? At a high level, what does the organisation want to achieve from the change? Typically, there are no more than eight Strategic Value Items on the Benefits Value Map and getting the right level of detail is critical to its effectiveness. In many cases the Strategic Value is identified at the outset of Benefits Value Mapping however only comes into play after the Operational Benefits have been identified.

In the example below, taken from the Corporate Office project, we consider Operational Benefit J "Increased Assurance in sustainability with electric buses". This contributes to Strategic Item 2 "Enhanced Corporate

Branding and Image' and also Strategic Item 4 "Accelerated Corporate Sustainability Targets. This is represented using the colour coding in the example below.

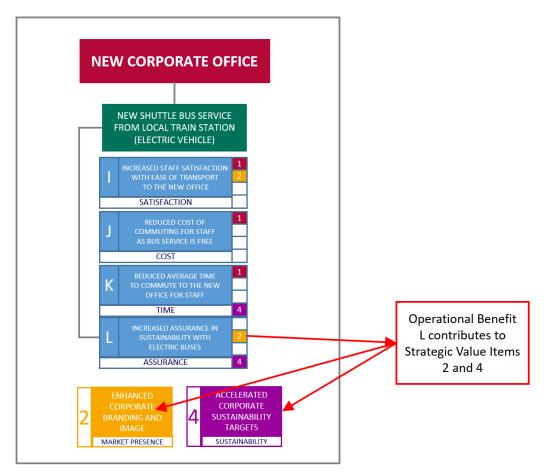


Figure 9: Aligning Operational Benefits to Strategic Value

The strategic items that the Operational Benefits contribute to are typically influenced by multiple factors, many outside of the control of the project or programme e.g. a 20% reduction in Carbon emissions across the organisation is influenced by many factors, possibly hundreds. The project or programme may only be changing one or two of these factors. Proving causality can be challenging with so many variable factors influencing the overall outcome. For this reason, we show the contribution from the Operational Benefit to the Strategic Value item only and not as a quantifiable measurement. This is a common pitfall in benefits realisation; trying to numerically prove causality when it is too complex or at too high a level to quantify.

#### Top Tip



When considering the contribution of the Operational Benefit to the Strategic Value item it is important to consider how 'direct' the contribution is. For example, the Operational Benefit of 'Improved Contract Performance Management' on a building project may reduce risk and provide greater assurance however it is unlikely to have a 'direct' contribution to reduced Co2 emissions from the building. Other New Capabilities will directly provide this e.g. new heat pumps. Try to avoid claiming 'indirect' contributions as these will make your Benefits Value Model vague, harder to understand and less clear to communicate.

### The Importance of Prioritising to Aggregate the Benefits

As a business leader, you wouldn't want to see a list of hundreds of Operational Benefits. Where would you start? Would you ever understand what it means and make sense of all of the complexity? Another common pitfall in benefits realisation is trying to prioritise everything or not considering prioritisation at all. One of the most important reasons to prioritise is to ensure that the organisation focuses on the highest value benefits that make the biggest difference to its performance. The simple question is what are the top 'N' benefits from project X? with mathematical term 'N' being the most appropriate number. A top 'N' approach is the best way to ensure that benefits are prioritised at project level and aggregated to a programme level and so on up to an organisation portfolio level.

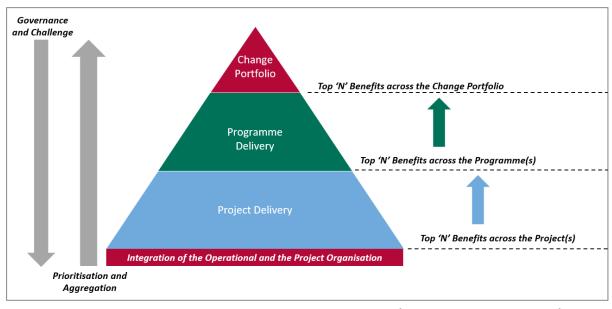


Figure 10: Benefits Led Change Portfolio Alignment (Repeated from Figure 2)

Prioritisation starts at a project level to ensure that it aligns bottom up to the overall portfolio. 'N' can be defined as whatever number is the most appropriate number. For example, it could be top five. This ensures that the organisation has clear line of sight to the most important benefits across the change portfolio. There is an important role for the Portfolio/Programme Management Office (PMO) to be custodian of the aggregated view across the change portfolio on behalf of the executive team.



A top 'N' approach is a sensible standardised way to prioritise and aggregate benefits. However, proper consideration must be given to ensuring that all highest priority benefits are included in the aggregation to the next level up e.g. where a top five approach is being used across projects, on an individual project there may be merit in including a top seven to be aggregated to the programme level; as the other two benefits are also critical. This shouldn't be seen as an opportunity to prioritise nearly everything The key point is materiality and critical importance to the organisation..

Whilst there are multiple ways to prioritise Operational Benefits, the important consideration is to ensure that it works for the organisation and that the executive team buy-in to the approach. A one dimensional

numeric rating e.g. one to five may give a sense of priority however does it consider the weighting of the risk of not realising the benefit?

There are two elements to consider when prioritising Operational Benefits:

#	Element	Narrative
1	The organisation's priority rating for the Operational Benefit	What is the numeric approach to prioritising each Operational benefit and how do they rank against each other?
2	The Risk of not achieving the Operational Benefit	What is the level of risk to achieving the benefit? How big a factor is this in prioritising the Operational Benefit?

Typically a one to five rating can be given to the two elements above for each Operational Benefit which can be multiplied together to give an overall benefits score.

#### Benefits Score = Priority Rating x Risk Rating for Not Achieving the Benefit

Every business leader wants to know what the top 'N' benefits are from their project. A simple ranked table of Operational Benefits can be a powerful communication to illustrate the spectrum of importance. When this is achieved through consultation and consensus it becomes even more important to securing overall buy-in and commitment.

One of the common issues is for the Benefits Score to be decided by the Project Manager or similar and simply issued to stakeholders. It requires careful consultation with the business side of the organisation to ensure the relevance and objectivity of the ranking. This is critical to ensuring that the Operational Benefits line up across the organisation's portfolio in a consistent and objective way.

#### Top Tip



When considering priority it is important to focus on which Operational Benefits deserve the greatest management attention. This may be decided from a simple one to five priority rating or you may want to also consider a weighting against the risk of not achieving the benefit. This is where the Benefits Score (priority rating x risk) comes in. After all, management should focus its attention on the highest priority benefits coupled with the highest risk of not achieving them.

# The Aggregated Programme or Portfolio View of the Benefits

A good visual tells a great story. One important element of prioritising the Operational Benefits is knowing what the overall picture looks like across a programme or portfolio. The aggregated Benefits Value Map provides a view of the overall summary based on a top 'N' benefits approach. It summarises the high value Operational Benefits that need to be prioritised. One word of caution, what is a priority now may not be a priority in six months time, hence the need for continual review and corrective action. A 'one and done approach' will only end up becoming irrelevant within a reasonable period of time.

The example below presents a programme or portfolio with three projects and the top five benefits for each one. It is important to consider that prioritisation also takes into account the risk element for not realising the benefit. Therefore a higher priority benefit with a low risk of failure may appear outside of the Top 'N' list. The important consideration is to focus management attention on the high priority and high-risk benefits. After all, why are we doing this?

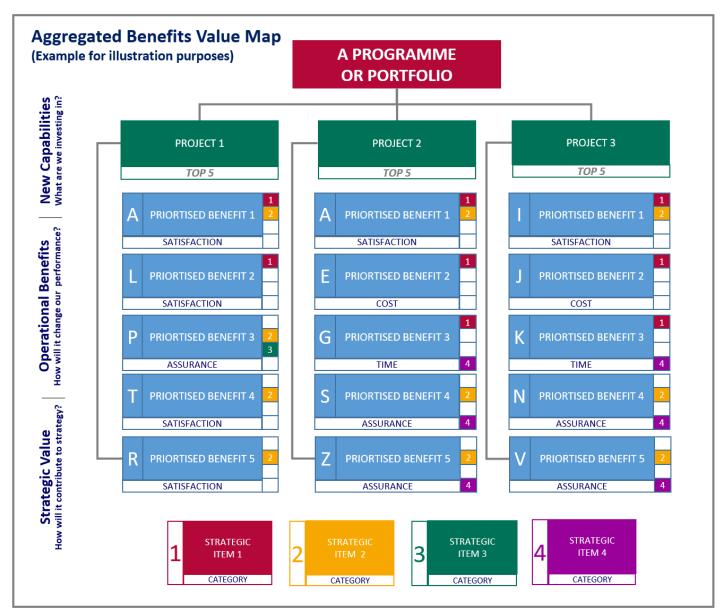


Figure 11: Programme or Portfolio Level Benefits Value Map

# Chapter 5

# Benefits Led Change: Bringing It All Together

# Step 2: Build Each Benefits Dashboard

Once the prioritisation is agreed and you have decided on your top 'N' Operational Benefits, developing the set of benefits dashboards is the next priority. The dashboards profile core information across the set of prioritised benefits from the project or programme. The only way that the dashboard makes sense is to ensure that it is highly relevant to the organisation and in particular the relevant business leaders, directly involved. These one-page dashboards form the single version of the truth for each Operational Benefit and become the key source of reference.

Such information, while not exhaustive, includes:

#	Heading	Summary
1	Ownership	Each Operational Benefit should have a 'Sponsor Owner' who sits at the executive table with operational accountability and a 'Day to Day' owner who has operational responsibility for the benefit.
2	Prioritisation	Prioritisation is summarised in Chapter 4.
3	Measurement Question	This is the question or questions that are asked to measure the Operational Benefit.
4	Method of Measurement	This is the measurement to be used and typically will align to the relevant operational KPIs for the organisation. An Operational Benefit could have multiple KPIs assigned to it. There is typically a primary indicator and supporting secondary indicators.
5	Baseline, target and actual values	The baseline measurement is the 'as is' value for the Operational Benefit and the target is the 'to be' measurement. The actual value is the post realisation measurement to prove that the Operational Benefit has been realised.
6	Milestones dates	There are a number of important milestones dates for each Operational benefit including the 'lag period after go-live of the new capability' and the 'end date to be realised'. Other dates include interim measurement dates until the end date for realisation.
7	Impacted stakeholder groups	This highlights the stakeholder groups that are impacted by the Operational Benefit e.g. the beneficiaries or those who will need to work differently for the benefit to be realised. This is important for communications and developing personas to drive engagement.
8	The Risk of not achieving the Operational Benefit	This is the rating to assess the level of risk of not realising the Operational Benefit. This is different to project risk and will be influenced by many operational factors post go-live of the new capability.
9	Actions to realise the benefit	These are the high-level actions that are necessary to realise the Operational Benefit and should focus on the required operational actions.

The example dashboard below illustrates Operational Benefit A from the 'New Corporate Office' project.

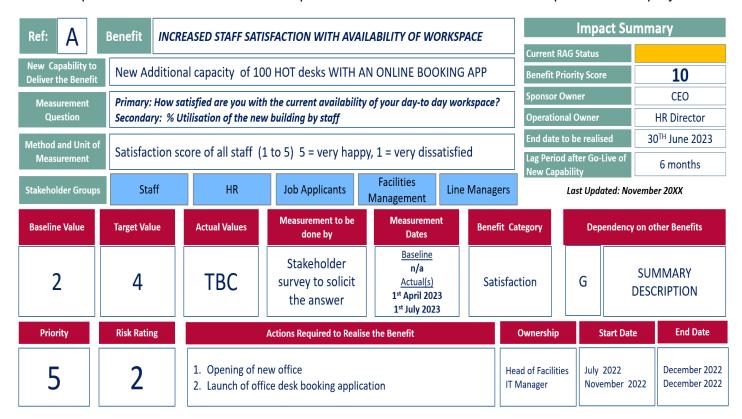


Figure 12: Example Benefits Dashboard

If you find that your stakeholders are unfamiliar with a benefits led approach, you may want to start with some basic terms and definitions. Don't start by developing the dashboards in isolation and sharing a final draft as the last step. The end-to-end approach requires targeted consultation and careful consideration from the outset. Without accuracy and completeness, stakeholder confidence will quickly suffer and they will find ways to avoid engaging or even withdraw totally.

Approached consistently across a change portfolio, these dashboards can be aggregated to form a collective set across the portfolio. The key point is to not let such activity form into a full-time industry for the organisation; hence it is critical to have a clear handle on prioritisation through a top 'N' approach. This requires a strong PMO or similar to ensure consistency of approach and quality of information. Now imagine if you had to aggregate the benefits across your organisation and there was no consistency or alignment of approach; not for the fainthearted.

#### Top Tip



Each Operational Benefit will have a primary performance indicator based on the six types of operational benefit measurements outlined earlier in this chapter. This will form the basis of the measurement question. Is it probable that you will also have secondary indicators drawn from the organisation's relevant set of Key Performance Indicators. Secondary indicators may not fully prove that the Operational Benefit has been realised however they support the primary indicator which does. Satisfaction or Assurance based Operational Benefits tend to have supporting secondary indicators. The important factor is that you provide a robust set of performance indicators to show that the Operational Benefit has been realised.

### Step 3: Create The Plan

The plan is the visual representation of the benefits aligned to the timeline for the delivery of the new capabilities. It also highlights the change management and communication activities that should happen to support realisation of the benefits. You will be surprised how many organisations avoid the alignment of planning for delivery and for benefits realisation.

Every Operational Benefit has a set of milestones and these drive the overall timeline. They also set expectations for the benefit across the organisation. The two main dates are the go-live of the new capability and the date when the benefit is actually realised along with any interim measurement dates. The period in-between is the lag period which is important to understanding the embedding period for the change to take hold. Notwithstanding, few organisations put in place planning which goes beyond the golive date of the new capability to profile the dates when the benefits will be realised.

In the example below, we consider the New Corporate Office Project and the phasing of Operational Benefit A: increased staff satisfaction with the availability of workspace. In this example there are two new capabilities driving the realisation of the benefit. The new corporate office and the new desk booking app.

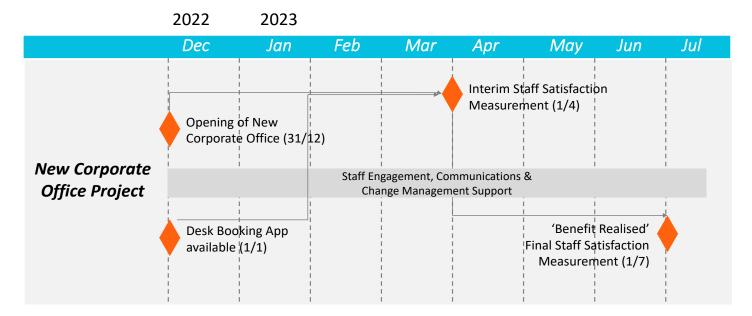


Figure 13: Example Integrated Delivery & Benefits Milestone Plan

### Step 4: Collect the Baselines

Baseline measurements are the foundation of setting the ambition for change. Without understanding the 'as is' position how can you set a target for the improvement? You will be familiar with the age-old adage, 'what gets measured gets managed'. Whilst this is not always the panacea for all challenges it is one that resonates with many.

Yet baseline measurement remain a contentious issue within many organisations. There are often challenges to collecting baseline measurements in terms of availability, completeness and accuracy. There is also a value principle to be considered; does the effort required to capture the baseline measurement outweigh the value? These are all important points to be considered when evaluating the options. Typically, the benefit owners are well positioned to make the best call.

#### Top Tip



It can be unreasonable to expect 100% of baseline measurements to be readily available in an organisation. Consider the materiality of the baseline measurement and the effort required to collect and collate the information. If this is not practical, consider a proxy/substitute measurement that would provide a close match. This is a perfectly acceptable approach.

The best baseline measurements are the ones that are already readily available in the organisation, however this is not always the case. Sources of baseline measurements include:

- 1. Staff surveys
- 2. Customer surveys
- 3. Senior management surveys
- 4. Survey kiosks
- 5. Management accounts
- 6. Financial ledgers
- 7. Time recording systems
- 8. Performance management reporting systems or reporting packs (either organisation wide or specific business areas)

Where baseline measurements are not readily available it is perfectly acceptable to use proxy measurements in their place. If the effort of collecting the baseline measurement outweighs the value of having it, consider using a substitute measurement that will give you a reasonable indication of numeric value. For example, if the average commute time to work for all staff is not readily measurable consider using a staff survey with time bandings to indicate perceived commute time. The important point is to ensure that the survey population sample is large enough to contain a clear median value and strip out any bias. This principle can be applied across all Operational Benefits.

#### Top Tip



Be wary of survey questions that have an odd number of options for the stakeholder to respond to. When stakeholders are time poor or disinterested, there is a tendency to select the middle value which may or may not be reflective of the actual situation. This may skew the overall result for the benefit.

Surveys are a great way of capturing feedback quickly and are often used to collect baseline measurements. It is important to avoid survey fatigue within an organisation as response rates get lower over time. For this reason, many organisations organise an annual staff survey or similar. These create a time dependency on access to a scheduled staff survey against the urgency of need for the baseline information. Whist there is no easy answer to this, consider if an online poll or similar of a smaller defined population would achieve the same result.

## Step 5: Set the Ambition

Ambition provides the foundation for the change; after all, 'why are we doing this?' The Business Case summarises the overall ambition for the change however it typically doesn't go into the detail of every benefit. Agreeing the 'to be' position for the Operational Benefit clearly sets out the ambition for the organisation. There is a strong link to strategy and business planning ensuring that the ambition set for the Operational Benefit will play its part in achieving the relevant goal(s).

When setting a target, you also need to consider any interim targets and related measurements. How often should any interim measurements take place, if any? The Benefit Owner(s) will have the accountability for ensuring that it is realised and they will need to consider and approve any targets. They also need to be considered at the relevant governance level. There is a human tendency to underestimate emotive targets to allow for contingency, particularly for cost saving benefits.

# Step 6: Review And Take Corrective Action

Once the new capability is delivered and the benefits start to be realised, the role of the benefit owner(s) becomes all important along with the overall governance of change across the organisation. Long after the project team have departed for pastures new, the responsibility and accountability still sits with the Benefit Owner(s).

This is where benefits convergence is critical to getting the right balance and avoiding duplication of effort. The PMO needs to work closely with Change Managers, the Performance Management Team and the Finance Team along with other functions to support visibility and decision analysis.

A top 'N' approach for benefits across the organisation empowers governance to focus on the highest priority items. For this reason, the integration of operational and change governance is critical to success. Where the average tenure of senior executives in the organisation is short there can be a significant challenge to ensure continuity of focus when the baton is passed over. The important elements of review and corrective action are:

### Board level visibility of the Top Benefits

There needs to be regular board level visibility of the highest priority benefits from across the portfolio along with alignment to current operational priorities. This goes way beyond maintaining oversight of delivery and which revolves around different timelines focused on getting change past the post. There is an important role for the PMO or the Performance Management team to provide clear visibility of the most up-to-date position on the highest priority benefits. Technology plays an important part and there are many standard and customised applications to support this level of visibility.

#### The So What? Factor

The benefits owner(s) will have a vested interest in managing the benefit and ensuring that it has the desired impact on the operational side of the organisation. If you look at the reality of a situation, benefits prove 'success' and they also prove 'failure'. This factor will drive individual behaviours and ones that need to be in the best interests of the organisation. When a benefit is not on track to be realised, we must ask the question, so what? Is it material? and if so, what remedial action are we going to take to get it back on track?

#### **Remediation Plans**

Whilst the benefit owner(s) are responsible for the remediation plan, there is a strong role for the PMO and other teams to ensure that any resultant action plan is robust and time achievable. The composition of the team is dependent on how far out it is from delivery of the new capability; the longer the timeline, the less likely it is that those leading delivery will be involved. There will be supporting business analysis to be undertaken including options analysis to be steered through governance and agreed. The reality in many organisation is that newer operational priorities take precedence and depending on that focus of leadership remediation plans may or may not be effective.

Top Tip



The two elements that have the greatest impact on 'Review and Corrective Action' are explicitly named benefits ownership along with alignment of the organisation's governance for change and operations. As happens within some organisations and despite best intentions, focus disappears, people move on or behaviours result in deliberately shifting the attention to newer priorities to conceal negative results.

# Making Benefits Led Change Sustainable

There are many reasons why benefits are important to an organisation. They set out the ambition for the future and the milestone-based journey towards the ultimate outcome. Change is a significant financial and time investment in any organisation and the focus on benefits should be paramount for all leaders. After all, why are we doing this?

Think of the amount of times information relating to change can be requested or has to be made available in your organisation. Ultimately, this relates to the capabilities, the benefits and timing. Such requests for information include:

- 1. Media enquiries
- 2. Press releases
- 3. Annual reports
- 4. Staff engagement
- 5. Marketing and customer communications
- 6. Governance and information flow
- 7. Strategy development
- 8. Business planning
- 9. Sales performance reports

- 10. Internal Audit
- 11. External Audit
- 12. Organisation performance management
- 13. Business case development
- 14. Investment appraisal
- 15. HR: personal objective setting
- 16. HR: performance appraisals
- 17. Others

Typically, information relating to change and benefits is held by many different teams across the organisation and there is often a scramble to collate it to meet a business deadline. Imagine a world where the information is accurate and centrally available to respond to critical requests for information.

The sustainability of Benefits Led Change is a medium to long-term goal after the euphoria of implementing a new approach fades away. Times change and what was a priority two years ago may be different in the current environment. It is surprising how many initiatives are adopted by organisations with great determination only to fade away down the road when it is overtaken by the next shiny thing or when one leader departs and a new one brings different priorities. Implementing a Benefits Led Change approach requires more than just setting out a vision, charting a course and hoping for the best. Sustainability is more than just a goal to achieve. It needs to be maintained and enhanced to align to new emerging priorities. The approach to Benefits Led Change needs to continually adapt to the needs of the organisation. There are two main aspects to this in any organisation; Leadership and Ways of Working.

#### Top Tip



Sustainability requires much more than a good technical approach to Benefits Led Change. It also requires commitment and leadership along with organisational capability to make a difference. Avoid putting faith in a defined process with an expectation that everything else will follow. This is the classic trap in a project and programme environment where value from a process is overly relied on. If you were a CEO, would you put your faith in your team telling you not to worry as they have a great benefits realisation process?

## **Leadership: What is Important?**

The culture of the organisation is important to the sustainability of Benefits Led Change. What is the appetite for innovation and continual change in your organisation? Is leadership committed to an ambitious

change agenda? If the answer to these questions is high and yes, then sustainability will be an easier objective to achieve. Clear sponsorship of Benefits Led Change at the executive table is arguably the most important leadership factor. Who at the Executive table is championing Benefits Led Change? Have they got sufficient influence? The other important factor is the individual behaviours of the Executive Team. Are they prepared to highlight both success and failure on the journey to realise the benefits? Is there an appetite to face scrutiny internally and externally, potentially in the public media? Never underestimate the power of the media to drive internal behaviours. These are all leadership factors that will drive sustainability of Benefits Led Change in your organisation.

# Ways of Working: What is Important?

Benefits convergence is a critical factor in driving the sustainability of Benefits Led Change across your organisation. Without this in place, different teams will implement parallel approaches that will compete with each other, potentially creating significant duplication. For example, the Finance team managing financial forecasting and budgeting whilst the PMO is tracking cost savings against financial benefits. The suggested approach is to align both approaches with a single version of the truth and have both teams working off it. Convergence is not an easy thing to achieve as organisation politics and territorial boundaries need to be navigated, a task for a skilled diplomat.

The integration of operations and business change governance is another critical success factor. Typically, this can be achieved through the Executive Team directly leading governance of change and running the business in parallel. In some organisations a Portfolio Board undertakes the change leadership role as a subset of the Executive team. Benefits straddle both the operational and the change side of the organisation and without executive line of sight to both governance will be less effective. Without such an approach sustaining Benefits Led Change is considerably more difficult.

The maturity of the Portfolio Management Office (PMO) or similar function is important to ways of working. There needs to be an organisation epicentre for the approach and where better than the team leading out on the change portfolio. What is the level of buy-in and the maturity of the PMO in your organisation? Is it ready to lead out on Benefits Led Change? Too many organisations jump into benefits realisation as a process and never get to grips with the leadership or the behavioural side; this is where the success really lies.

When the approach is up and running how can we be confident that the information being presented on benefits across the organisation is both complete and accurate? Benefits convergence has a key role to play in this as there are multiple teams working in partnership to validate and present the information. The other aspect is targeted assurance and sample checking to ensure consistency of approach and the accuracy of the data. Overall, the Executive Board should have the confidence that their information on benefits can be relied on whether it comes from the PMO, the Performance Management team, the Finance team or another.

One of the most important aspects is training, mentoring and coaching. They are important ways of building an organisation's capability in Benefits Led Change. Organisations often run internal training programmes on project and change management, some rely on external providers. You can ensure that there is a Benefits Led Change focus within the content of the training, and you should also consider a training course on Benefits Led Change. Any training should have a wider business appeal to not just focus on the project and programme management community, as traditionally happens in many organisations. You need to be careful to train the right people and not just those willing to put their hand up first for selection.

## Chapter 7

## Communicating The Benefits: Engaging for Impact

The clarity of messaging and timing is everything when communicating change to stakeholders. On any project or programme, the narrative for the benefits along with stakeholder engagement and communication fundamentally overlap. Yet the skillsets across both areas are often seen as polarised and not always complimentary. The structured and logical process led approach to benefits realisation (left side brain) versus the softer more emotive art of meaningfully engaging with stakeholders (right side brain). This shouldn't be a barrier and the opportunity for effective benefits convergence is through partnership working with the organisation's communications team(s) along with Change Management; there is much to gain from all three sides. Communications should be supporting the realisation of the benefits including getting the timing of stakeholder engagement aligned to key milestones.

There are a number of important considerations in designing communications to support the realisation of benefits. They are:

#### **Understanding Cultural And Language Considerations**

When implementing change across international boundaries, what works in one environment might not in another. Consider local culture including ways of working and how this may impact the realisation of a benefit. For example, on a global project that impacts multiple countries, some including Canada are officially multi-lingual and in this case, communicating the benefits in English and French may have greater impact. Another example is the use of specific currency symbols when financial benefits are being communicated internationally. There are many other cultural considerations on international projects including religious, political, gender and regulatory factors. Maximise the opportunity for benefits through considering all the relevant cultural and language factors and get it right first time.

#### Making Use Of Technology

There are many opportunities to use technology to maximise the realisation of benefits through engaged, timely and meaningful communication. For example, social networking sites offer an opportunity to communicate across an organisation digitally and for stakeholders to engage with each other. Carefully managed these digital tools can make a real difference to the realisation of benefits. One word of caution, feedback is important and when provided digitally some may be positive and some may be negative. Negative feedback provides an opportunity for learning and careful consideration should be given to any digital response that might be provided to stakeholders. Think how many people will be influenced by your response.

#### Aligning To Change Management

Clearly, the role of change management is to ensure that the desired change is embedded within the organisation and this is a critical element of realising the benefits. Indeed in some organisations the change management team take responsibility for oversight of benefits in their domain. Again, through benefits convergence the opportunity is for change management to be benefits led and this is a key to success. Change management focuses on engagement, removing barriers to change and incentivising the right behaviours to drive success. All of this is critical to realising the benefits and communications should be aligned around benefits convergence and not competing approaches in the same space.



Change management and benefits realisation go hand-in-hand and communication of the key messages to stakeholders are critical element of this. After all, the embedding of the change within the operational side of the organisation directly supports the realisation of benefits. In some organisations, the change management team(s) are responsible for facilitating 'on-the-ground' benefits realisation and this can be a sensible approach. The critical success factor comes back to benefits convergence and the relevant functional teams across the organisation converging on one aligned approach.

#### The Importance of Visualisation

Communication professionals are creative with the design of messaging to support clear and meaningful engagement. When done well it can be very effective and a powerful catalyst for maximising the value from benefits. There are a number of visual aids that helpfully support the communication of benefits. These include:

#### Use Of Personas To Create Understanding and Buy-In

Using personas to communicate the benefits in the earlier stages of engagement can be effective. The objective is to introduce the benefits and visually show how they relate to individual stakeholders or specific groups. Harvey Ball diagrams provide a visual representation of the importance of the benefits to stakeholders. The more complete the four quadrants of the Harvey Ball the greater the importance of the Operational Benefit. The example below from the Office re-location project highlights the Operational Benefits across different stakeholders within the organisation.

#	Summary of the Benefit	Ben Accountant	Eric CEO	Mary Top Customer	Julie Head of HR	Gwen Field Engineer	Philip Job Applicant	Ross Landlord
A	INCREASED STAFF SATISFACTION WITH AVAILABILITY OF WORKSPACE							
В	INCREASED STAFF SATISFACTION WITH FORWARD RESERVATION OF DESKS							
C	INCREASED ASSURANCE IN AVAILABILITY OF WORKSPACE FOR NEW RECRUITS					0		
D	INCREASED VISITOR SATISFACTION WITH WORKSPACE AESTHETICS							
E	INCREASED STAFF SATISFACTION WITH EASE OF TRANSPORT TO THE NEW OFFICE				•	C		
F	REDUCED COST OF COMMUTING FOR STAFF AS BUS SERVICE IS FREE							
G	REDUCED AVERAGE TIME TO COMMUTE TO THE NEW OFFICE FOR STAFF				0		9	
Н	INCREASED ASSURANCE IN SUSTAINABILITY WITH ELECTRIC BUSES							

Figure 14: Benefits Persona Visual Using Harvey Balls

The important element is that careful consideration is given to any personas used to ensure that they are closely aligned to the organisation and easily recognisable, whether real people are used or just representative ones. The challenge is to figure out the best approach. If you think about it, people want to pick out themselves or their team and simply understand what it all means.

#### Use Of Infographics To Show How We Are Doing

Senior management expect to be able to demonstrate that the change is having the desired impact and that the benefits are being realised. Infographics are a great way to present critical information on benefits. What better way to communicate than through a carefully crafted infographic with the latest metrics that matter to the organisation. Infographics tend to be more effective in the mid to latter stages of the journey to realising the benefits. It makes sense that not everybody will welcome every infographic; after all Benefits Led Change communicates success and failure. The organisation needs to accept that the storyboard will be an actual representation of the benefits and may share information that suggests a level of failure. This needs to be seen as an opportunity for review and corrective action rather than one to bury the metric in the detail in the hope that it won't be focused upon. Open honest conversations provide the opportunity for improvement. The challenge is to be objective and successfully navigate the organisation politics. Not a task for the faint hearted.



Figure 15: New Corporate Office Project Benefits Infographic

### Single Benefit Campaigns To Maximise Value

A high priority benefit is one that is critical to what the organisation wants to achieve from the change. This is where the value from single benefit communication campaigns kicks in; targeting stakeholders based on priority, timing and single focus messaging.

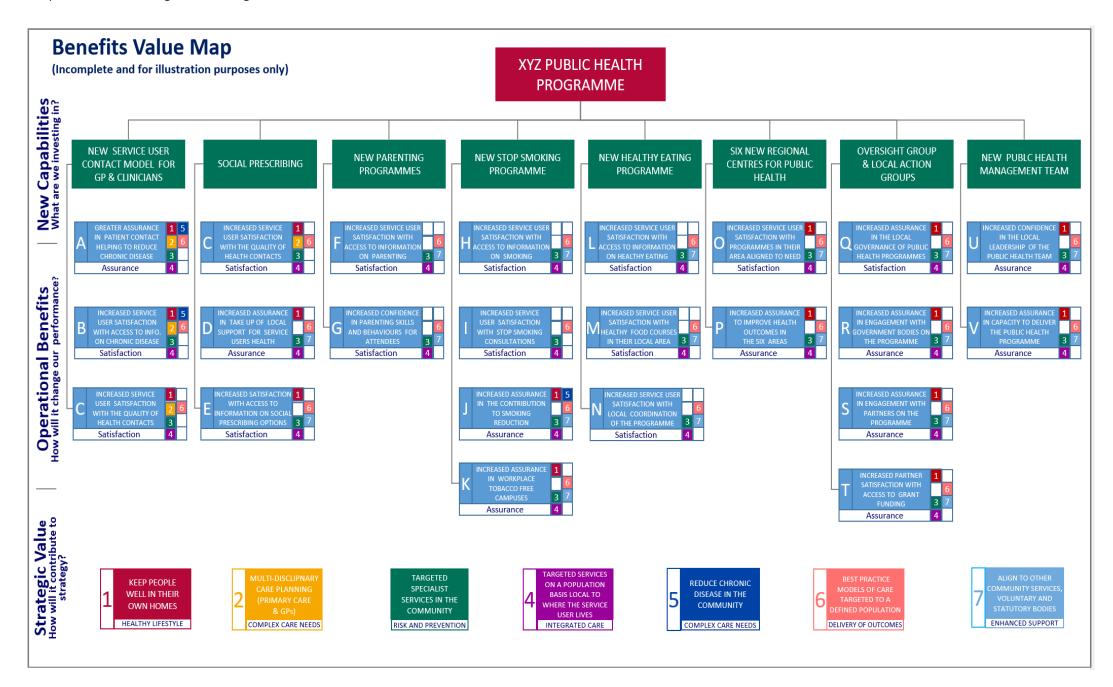
In the Office Relocation Project example, one of the key benefits B is 'Increased Staff Satisfaction with Forward Reservation of Desks'. To maximise value each staff member needs to be fully aware of the new capability with the desk booking system and how to use it. There is initial awareness communication to ensure that all staff members know about it in the first place. This could be a specific communications campaign in advance of go-live through an announcement email to relevant staff, town-hall style briefing, posters around the office and targeted social networking posts. Then we need to ensure that the relevant staff know how to fully use the application to book a desk. This could include a 'how to guide' issued over email or left on desks. It could also include a section on the intranet to access information on 'how to' and may also include a helpdesk number. All of the channels combine to ensure that communications support the realisation of the benefit. Without this coordinated action the results against the benefit may be not what was expected and at worst disappointing.

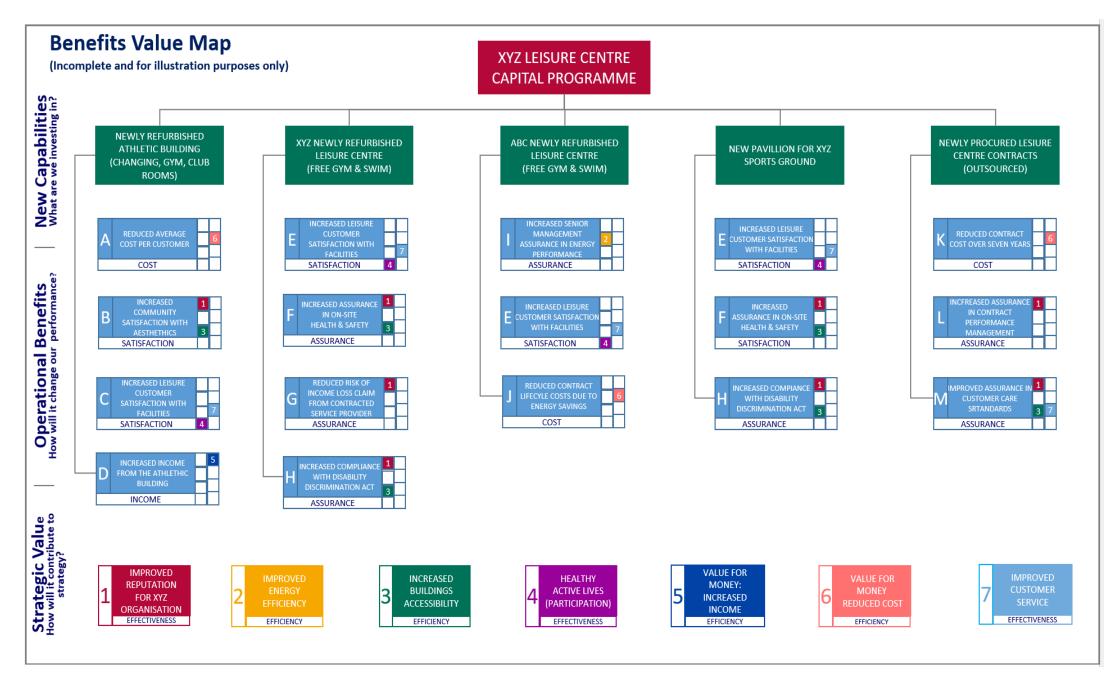
#### Making Sense Of It All

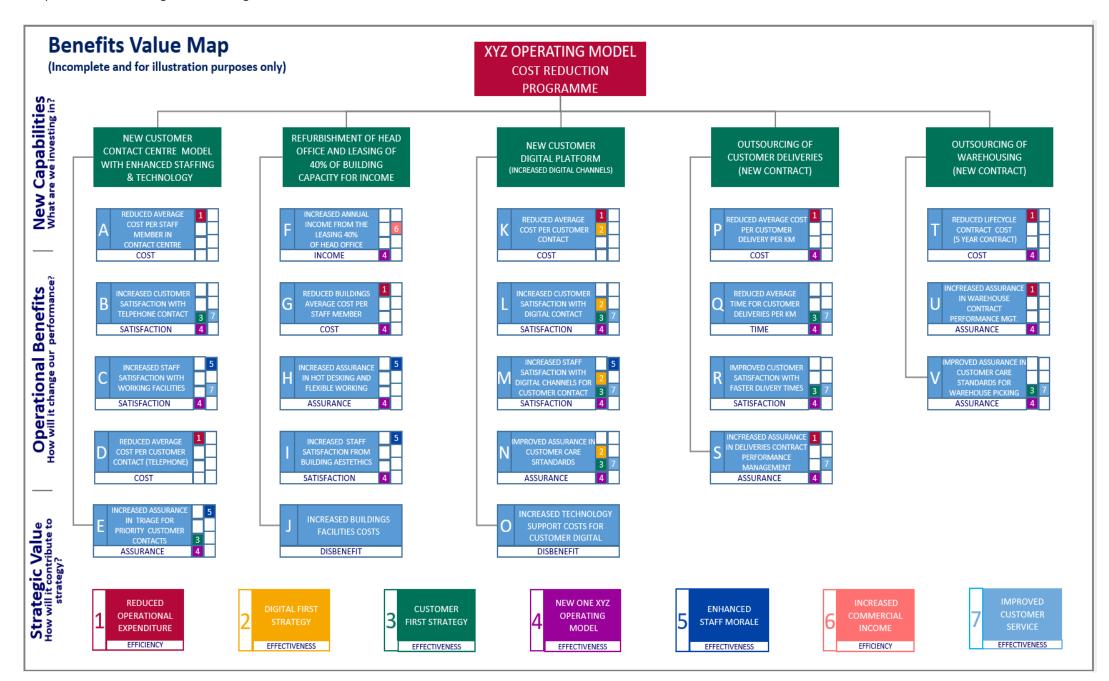
Many organisations miss out on the opportunity to make change communications benefits led. There are always important opportunities to bring innovation, good practice or valuable technology to the table. The important factor is keeping the approach relevant and valuable to the organisation. Continuous improvement is critical to long-term sustainability, ensuring that the approach to Benefits Led Change keeps pace with the challenges faced through the enormity of the organisation's change agenda. The key question is: are you prepared for the road ahead and can you innovate and continually improve? Ultimately the reason for delivering change is to realise the benefits, otherwise **why are we doing this?** 

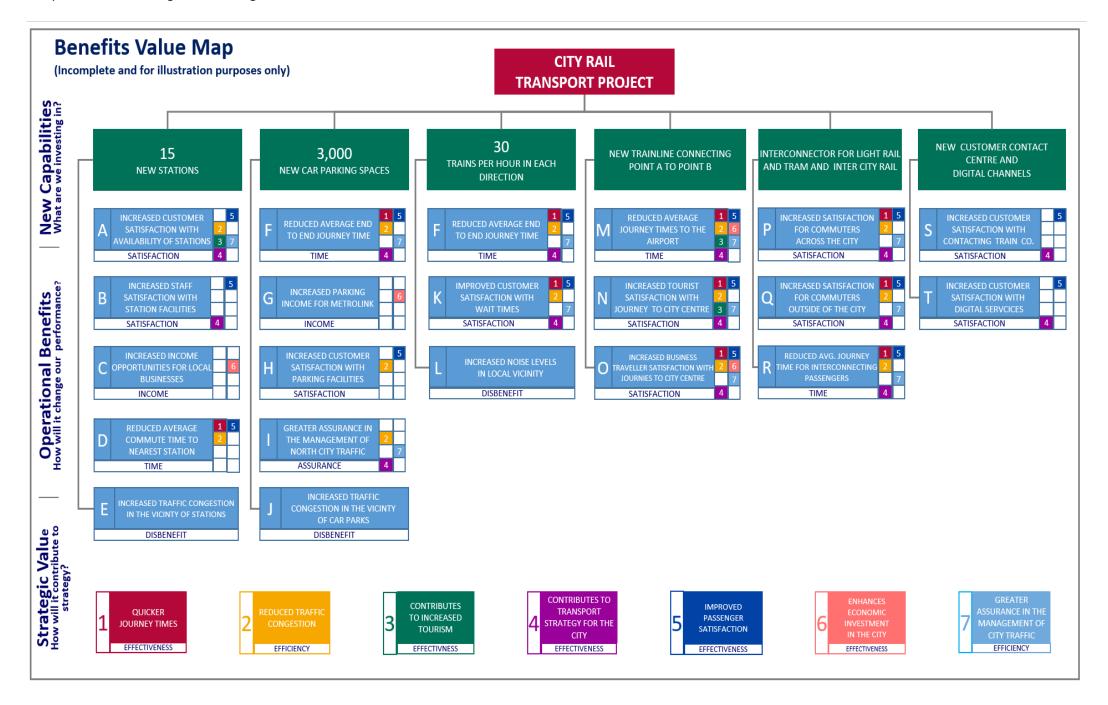
# **Benefits Led Change Example Benefits Value Maps**

The following Benefits Value Maps are incomplete and for illustration purposes only









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This book takes the business leadership perspective on benefits realisation. It is written specifically for those business leaders who are struggling to ensure that beneficial change is being realised for the organisation, as intended

It outlines the opportunity to raise the capability of your organisation and its leaders to maximise value from investment in change. It will help you set the direction and give you the support that you need on the journey to Benefits Led Change.

