



Improving Major Project performance by Improving Leadership Behaviour

Project Controls Expo
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In the News

... but the tone has changed now



For good reasons then ...



Common Challenges in Project Control?

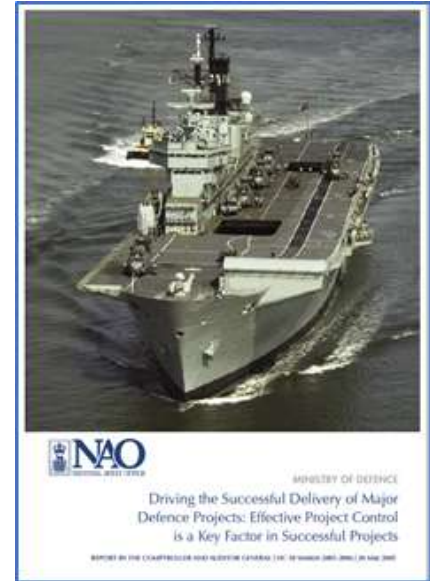
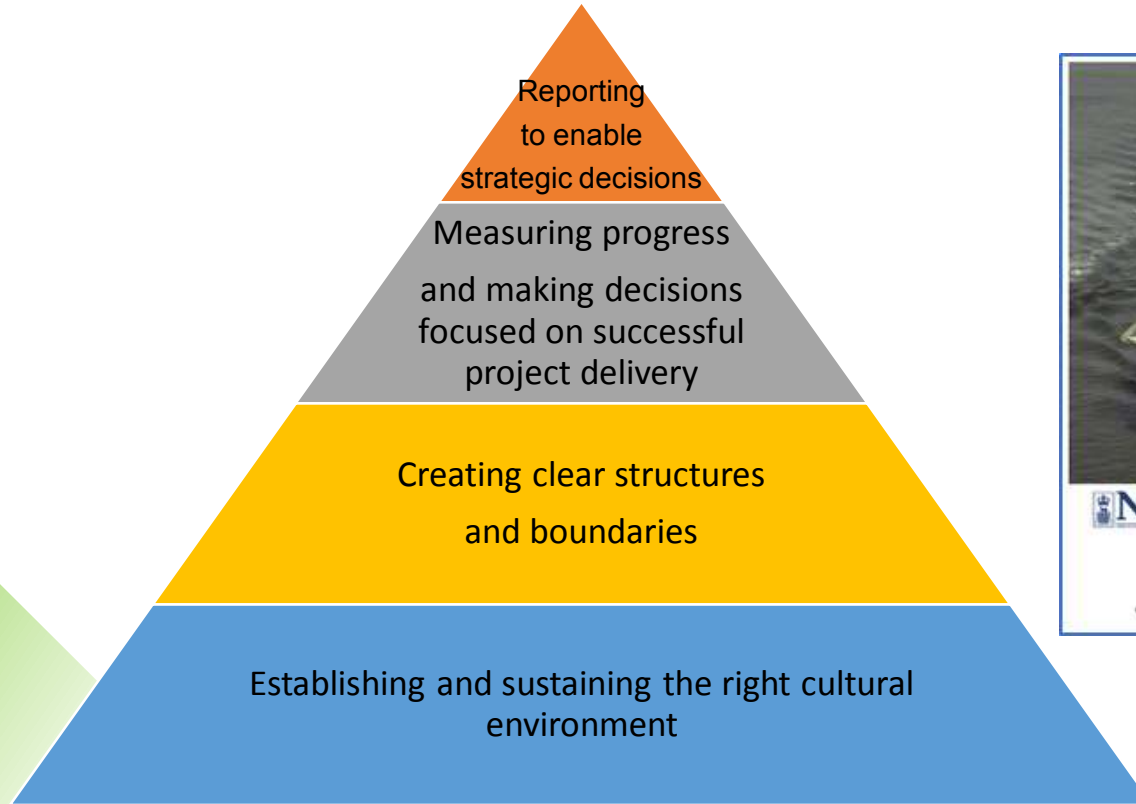
- A culture of 'Trust Me' in eventual achievement of target dates
- Suppression of bad news
- Denial of metrics and trends which forecast programme slippage
- Burial of the truth under an avalanche of metrics
- Future performance is usually assumed to recover to the original target position
- "We never believed it was possible anyway...."
- Lack of action taken when trends do emerge
- "A conspiracy of optimism which works against establishment of realistic baselines"
- Immature understanding of how to analyse the data

Common Challenges in Project Control?

- Variances presented as data but not explained, and no action
- Incomplete reported data
- Data quality considered too poor to be used
- “Watermelon” reporting
- Decisions not clearly made or documented
- Mortgaging future programme by compression to accommodate current slippage
- Lack of schedule adherence masked by rebaselining
- The lack of timeliness of reporting means that project data is not topical or review preparation time is limited

NAO Report “.... difficulties were compounded by a weak programme management culture which lacked transparency, neglected or overrode project control systems and disciplines, and produced forecasts that lacked depth and reality.”

The Gold Standard for Project Control



Leadership Behaviour is Important

“Behaviours and culture are just as important as process”

There are a number of common traits among project leaders that can result in wrong behaviours and decisions on major projects, such as having a blind commitment to succeed without a balanced perspective

Project success also relies on positive behaviours

Investment in relationships between project leaders, delivery organisations and suppliers encourages joint decision-making and problem-solving.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA). Annual report on the UK Government major project portfolio, released in July 2019



Technical & Behavioural Success

- As technical people we tend to focus on technical challenges and technical fixes
- But there are good examples of other approaches
- Behavioural approaches have transformed other aspects of performance
- When combined they seem to have the greatest impact

Where theory meets reality

Are you lonely?

Tired of working on your own?
Do you hate making decisions?

HOLD A MEETING!

You can –

- See people
- Show charts
- Feel important
- Point with a stick
- Eat donuts
- Impress your colleagues

All on company time!



MEETINGS

THE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO WORK

- Theoretical improvements need real world context
 - bring to life the theory
 - provide focus for practical improvements
- Project Monthly reviews are where leadership meet regularly
 - Project data is reviewed
 - Options are considered
 - Issues escalated for help or decision
 - Decisions are taken
 - Performance is controlled
- Project Reviews represent a relatively controlled, repeatable environment
- We can establish a reference point for Project Review conduct and, following suggested interventions, assess whether changes have made improvements



Leadership Behaviour Survey Results

%	Response	%	Response
30%	disagreed that project performance decisions were based primarily on data	72%	attended reviews that ran late and/or didn't cover all of the material
37%	thought that opportunities are not chased as hard as risks are mitigated	51%	thought that project behaviour requirements were described and communicated to all
41%	said that losses are criticised more than gains are celebrated	37%	said that help was only sometimes offered when it was requested
38%	agreed that threats are underestimated, when measured against the actual outcome	54%	said that help was only provided sometimes when it was actually directed by leaders
66%	agreed that the probability of success of decisions is overestimated	14%	said that most of the time decisions are taken without relevant information. The proportion rose to 31% who said that this was the case at least half of the time
57%	considered that they typically needed more time to consider documents prior to reviews	60%	said that leaders only sometimes or never seek diverse views before making decisions
52%	said that actions weren't routinely captured as SMART objectives	31%	said that people affected by decisions were consulted less than half of the time

Spectrum of Behavioural responses

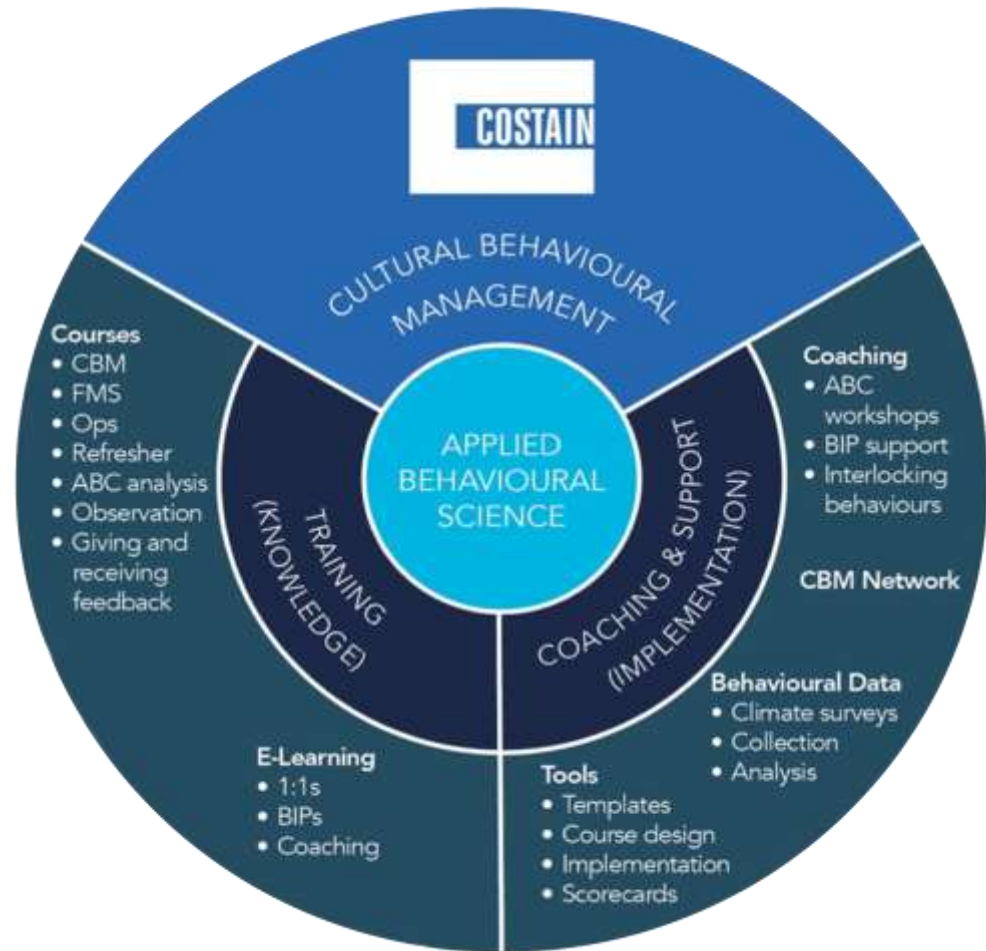
Negative Responses	Event	Positive Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denial Blame – shoot the messenger Rebaseline 	Cost growth forecast in month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact assessment Offer help Seek opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignore the data – use SOFT All data must be rubbish 	Data incomplete or showing errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions to correct What conclusions can be drawn from what is presented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignore ‘Bring me solutions not problems’ Treat as a weakness 	Help requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to understand Commit to providing help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gut-feel decision Kick the can 	Decision required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data to inform Use range of decision making techniques Consult Empower
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delay response – more data required High risk decisions Blame the baseline 	Schedule delay reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions to correct Impact assessment Offer help

The principles

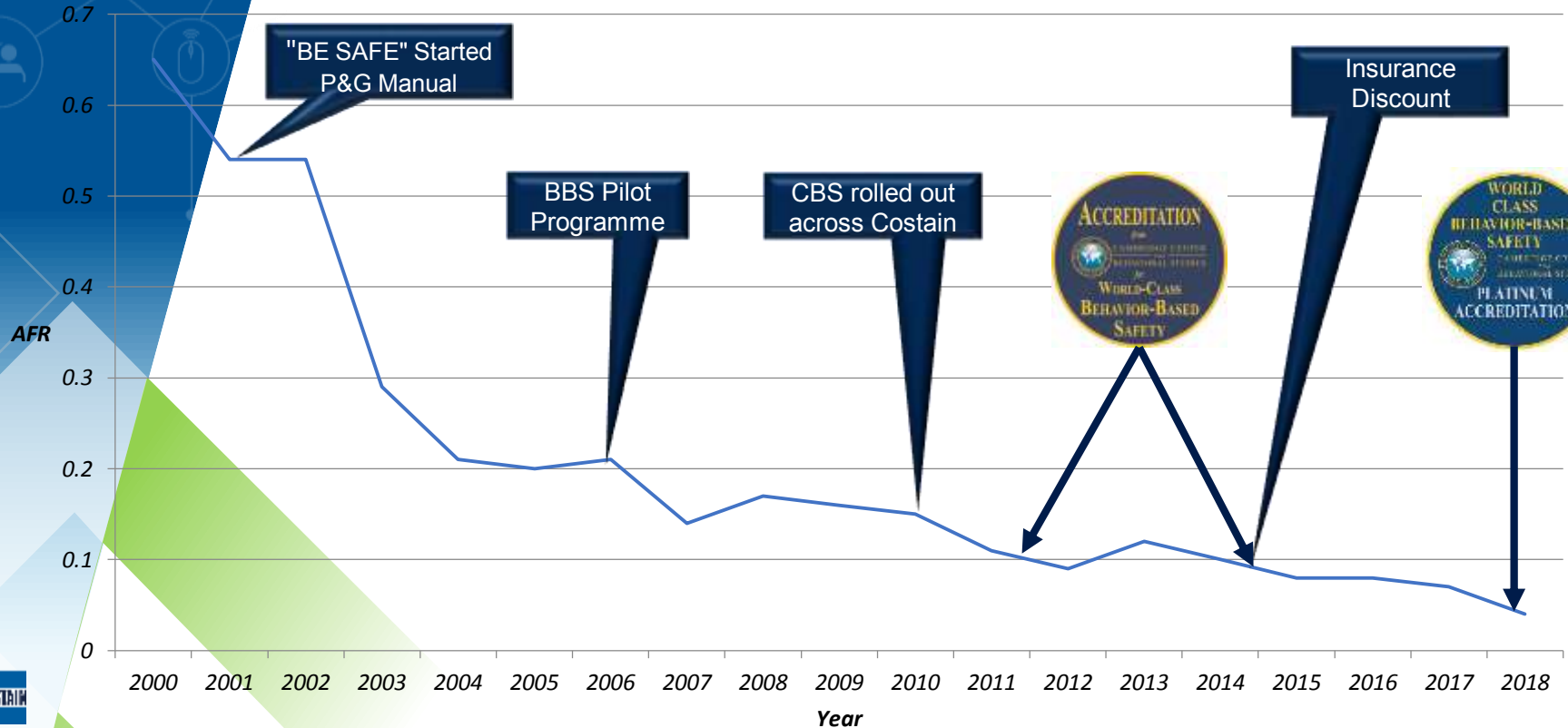
Systematic data based approach

literal
smart

“say and do”



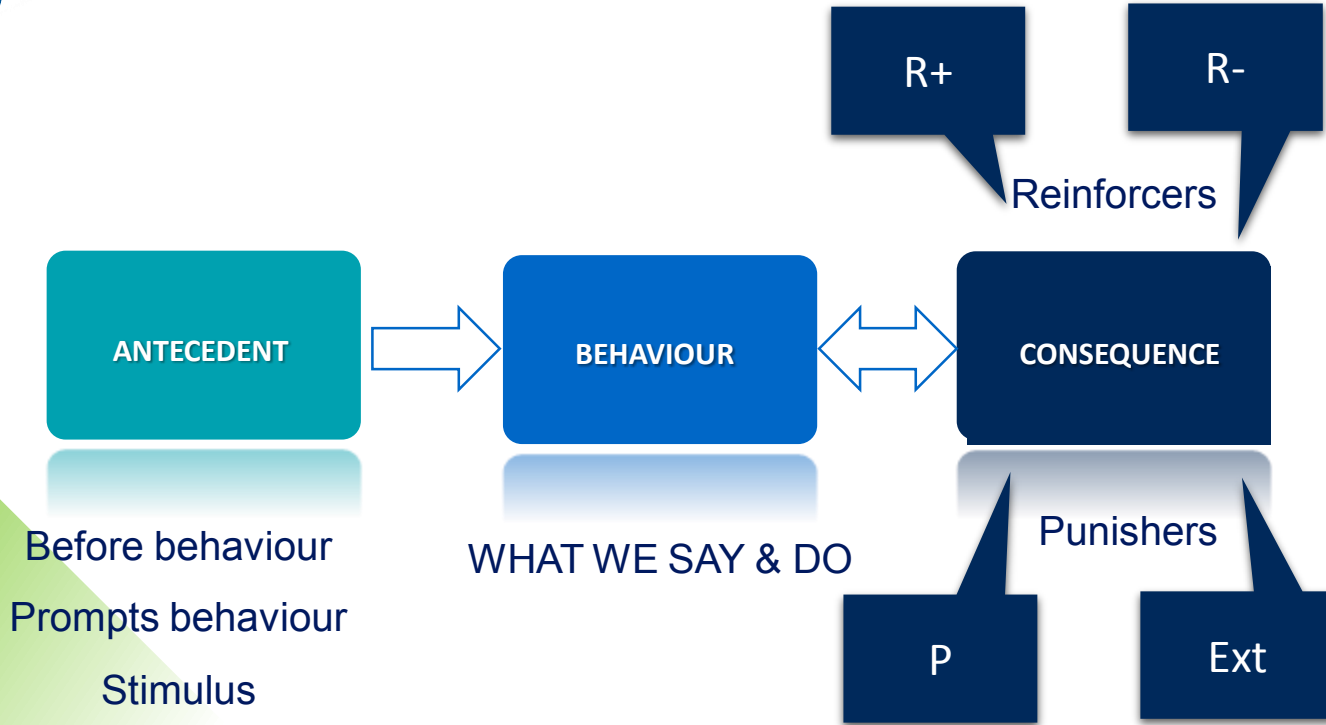
Our path and progress



Leadership flow of positions – behaviours aligned to results

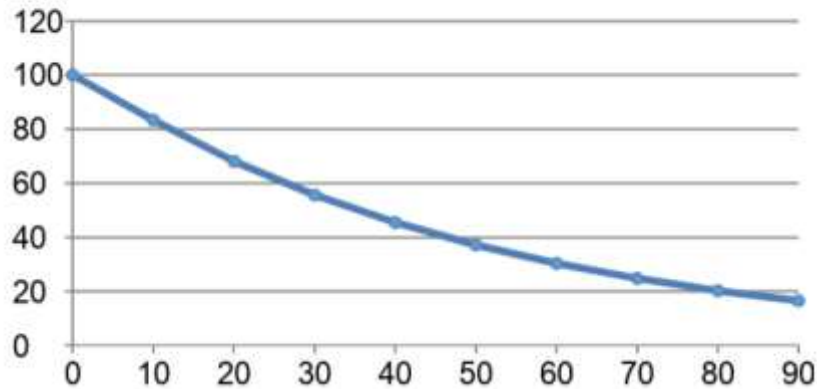


All behaviour is a function of ...



An issue

Megaproject Completion > 10, 15 Years. Later Uncertain



Behaviours

**R+ R-
P Ext**

The environment



Project Controls Meeting

Talking about data
Talking about project performance
Talking about information on slide packs
Disputing the data

Reinforcers
Punishers

Leadership behaviour

R+ R-
P Ext



Response

- How many of the attendees speak?
- How many people make comments and provide information that is positively reinforced by the leader
- How many people speak to avoid something unpleasant
- How many ask for support – what response is given?



“Get a grip”

Judgement Assumption error

stimulus and response



41%

said that losses are criticised more than gains are celebrated

37%

said that help was only sometimes offered when it was requested

A

Asked about progress

B

“I need help”

C

- Offered help
- None provided



A

I need help

B

Start talking about something else

C

- “Phew”; moved on: avoidance behaviour

Get
your
data

Before we make assumptions

A

Asked about
progress

B1

X 2

"I need help"

C

- Offered help
- None provided



Intervention?
Observe : Data : R+ R- P Ext

A

I need help

B2

X 4

Start talking
about
something else

C

- "Phew"; moved on: avoidance behaviour

Performer's Perspective

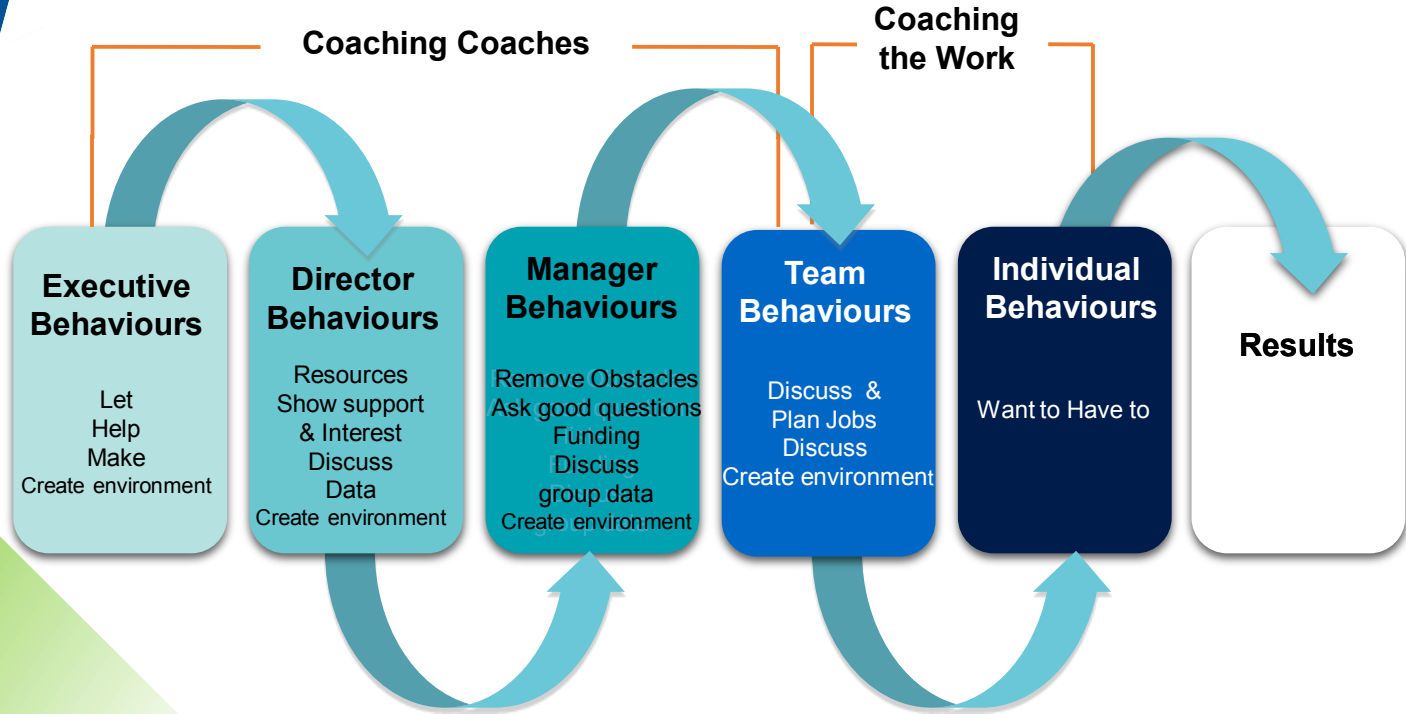
One performer only

Antecedents	Current Behaviour	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Request for helpThis meeting and previous meetingsVariance report highlights a problem	e.g. “get a grip”, “let’s move on”, “take this offline”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Used experience and judgementUpset the requesterWon’t get asked againI’m under enough stress at is it
← Step 1 – Observe, collect data, analyse →		
Antecedents	Desired Behaviour	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feedback on behaviour from trusted sourceData on frequency of occurrenceRequest for help	e.g. “What do you need?” “What do you need from me?” “Who can help?” “How can I help you”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Experience a more positive response from the teamSee the team helping each other and being more self-sufficientI get to hear the truthI don’t like what I hear
Must do something different		Need to introduce a new reinforcer
← Step 2 – Plan, new antecedents (intervention) and consequences →		

Reciprocity

Trust
Credibility
Relationship

Interlocking behaviours...are key



Systematic data based process

THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR TEAM IS A DIRECT REFLECTION OF YOU AND THE ENVIRONMENT YOU CREATE FOR IT



Section three - Analyse the current environment

Assessable	At risk behaviour	Consequences	R/P	IL	DU

Section four - Design and evaluate a new work system

Assessable	At risk behaviour	Consequences	R/P	IL	DU

Section five - Reflect on success of this change

Assessable	At risk behaviour	Consequences	R/P	IL	DU

Complex – one size does not fit all
Environment R+ R- P Ext

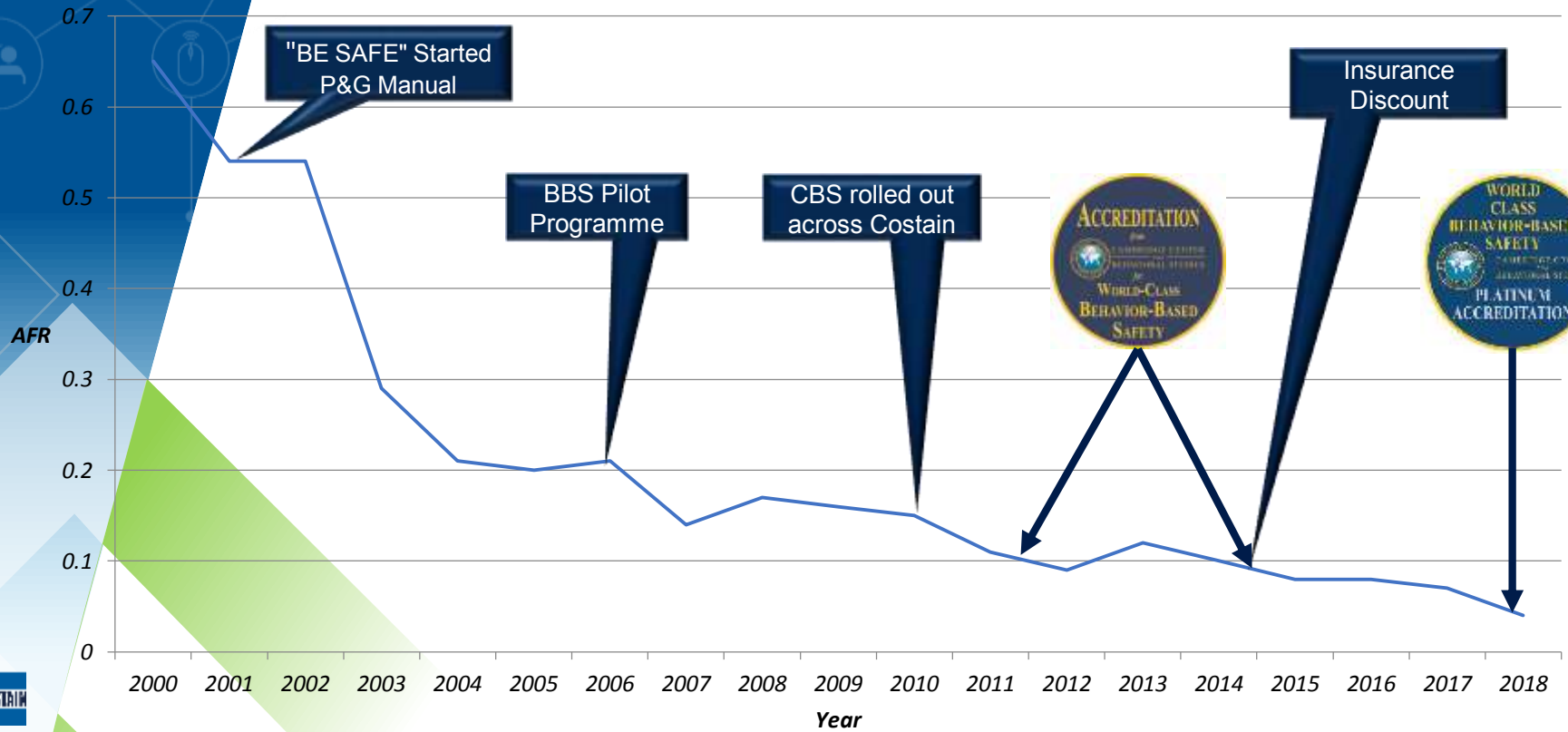
How this is applied

Measure	Baseline	Achieved
Submission of budgets for business plan	15%	100%
Change Requests priced before deadline	25%	71%
Design Documents - delivered and accepted	71%	96%
Increasing the completion of Target Cost Actions	60%	92%
Increasing accurate Design Change information	20%	80%
Projects approved or rejected	20%	67%
Renewal of contracts within specified time periods	0%	95%
Process implementation completion against target	50%	92%



People using the skills techniques

It works



It can
be done

Behavioural
data

Major Project Leadership Behaviour

Be precise

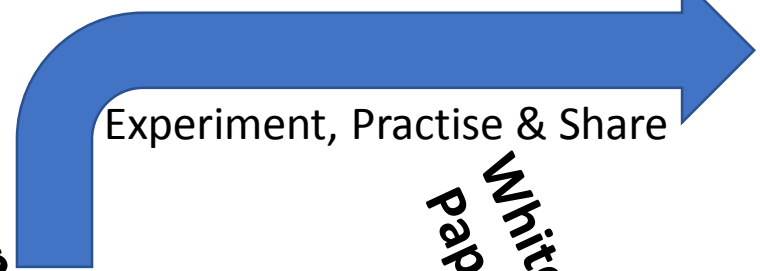
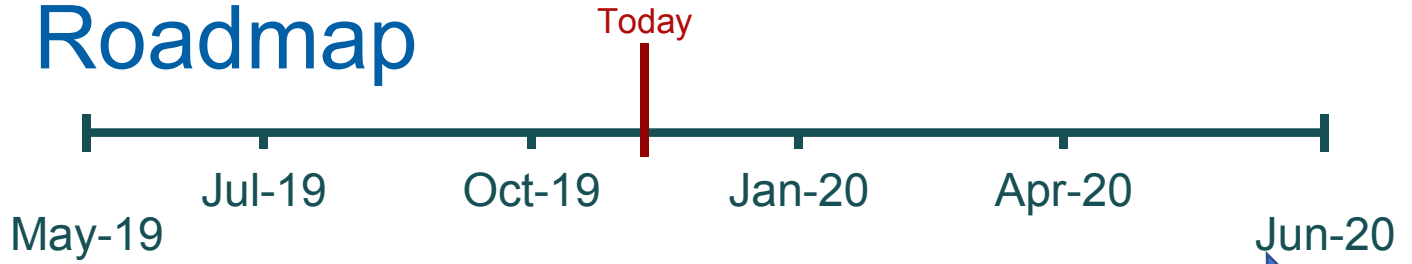
1. Identify behaviours within your leadership teams and pinpoint those to reduce or increase
2. Pinpoint and measure the current behaviour (starting point)
3. Identify the current antecedents and consequences from the perspective of the person experiencing the consequences
4. Identify the interventions: Change the antecedents and reinforcing consequences
5. Implement the plan and measure the change
6. Reinforce success, help and support those who request it
7. Give and receive feedback
8. Make it stick before moving on to the next intervention

Benefits of behavioural approach

- Leadership and the environment
- Systematic and scientific
- Common language
- Incremental gains
- Becomes business as usual
- Sustainable



Roadmap



PC Expo

White Paper



Edinburgh Roundtable



Small sample survey



Large sample survey



Wider engagement



Major Project Leadership Behaviour

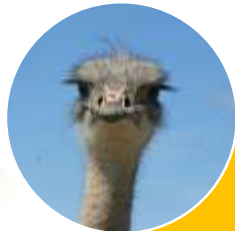
Leadership behavioural improvement is worth pursuing and there are proven, practical methods to achieve it



Share



Experiment



Ignore





Visit us at Stand 12



#smarthinking

