



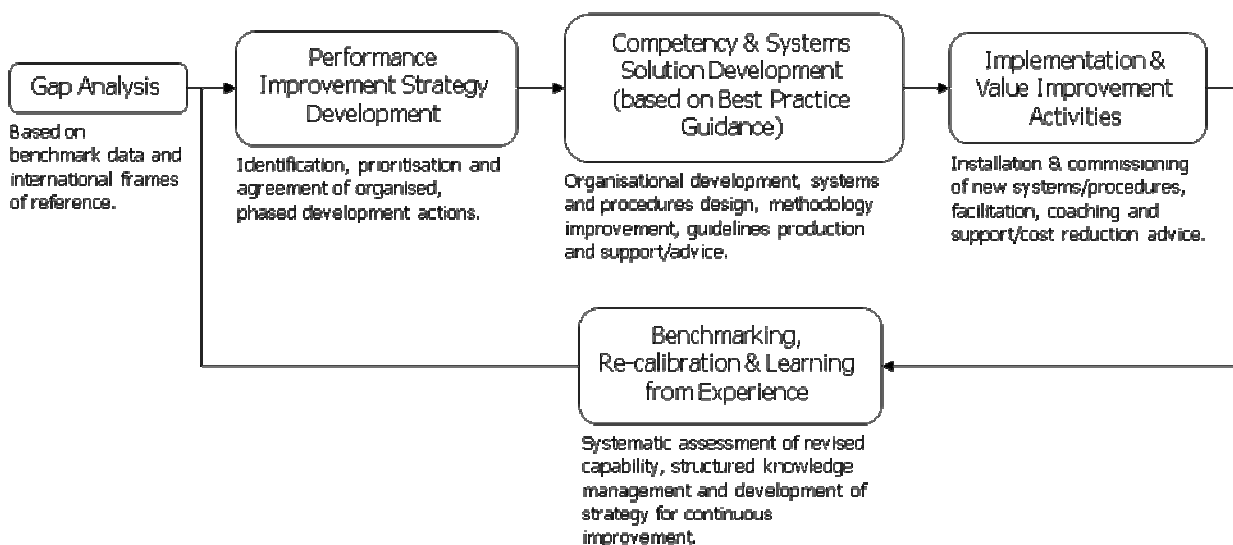
Consulting Capability and Approach

Studies by independent benchmarking specialists indicate that companies practising “Best Practice” project and programme management can obtain significant improvement on business performance (20% Return on Capital Expenditure relative to the average, improved Time-to-Market and other business benefits). It is thus hardly surprising that improving project management competence across the enterprise is an increasing preoccupation of companies undertaking projects and programmes.

MDC has a long track record of helping companies to improve their project and programme management performance. MDC works at all levels of the enterprise ladder; developing professional leadership; defining and embedding best-practice (via Support Offices or their equivalent); undertaking quality assurance and value improvement support.

The tried and tested consulting approach used by MDC is illustrated in the following diagram and explained in more detail below:

MDC Consulting Approach



Gap Analysis

There are many significant challenges in creating successful project and programme management capability such as a clear business rationale; top-management support/leadership/commitment; clearly articulated project/ programme management practices/processes embedded so that they seem instinctive; performance measurement and understanding the critical success factors required to achieving sustained improvement.

The best means of generating effective project and programme management capability is to know (a) where you stand currently against best practice and (b) what your development priorities should be and what your available resources are.

The MDC Gap Analysis Tool has been continuously developed from benchmark data and international frames of reference over the last 10 years. It is also founded upon a considerable body of evidence that has been accumulated showing that:

- Proficiency in the traditional Body of Knowledge type project planning, monitoring and controlling tools is necessary to support project success but is not sufficient on its own.
- Factors such as front-end development, project strategy, comprehensive requirements definition, design/technology development, resource acquisition, organisational/people development and stakeholder management tend to be even greater contributors to project success.

The MDC Gap Analysis methodology uses all of these broad-based topics to carry out an interview-based evidential assessment of the project and programme management arrangements. There can be as many as 50 topics, although the number varies because the tool is tailored to each client situation. Interviews are conducted on a statistically relevant proportion of the project and programme management community using structured guides. Standard operating procedures, methodologies, manuals, systems, competency frameworks and other documentation are all assessed.

Performance Improvement Strategy Development

The output from MDC's Gap Analysis can be used to establish an organisation's performance improvement strategy. Importantly, not every one of the 50 or so topics in the Gap Analysis is likely to be of the same significance to every company. Hence MDC and the Client organisation both undertake a separate prioritisation exercise.

A review and adjustment process follows in which consensus is achieved on the importance that should be given to each topic. The resulting quotient is a 'Need to Improve' index where the topics are prioritised in order of those most needing attention. This becomes the basis for the performance improvement strategy, which is typically proposed by MDC in collaboration with the Client core team members and reviewed and endorsed by senior management.

Sustained and successful organisational change takes time. MDC generally casts its recommendations within a change management context focusing separately on quick-win gains and longer-term objectives. We nearly always find that organisations tackle improvement in phases, taking one or more topics at a time and achieving progressive embedding of best practice.

Competency & Systems Solution Development (based on Best Practice Guidance)

MDC often recommends a range of approaches to achieving the objectives of the performance improvement strategy. Sometimes new procedures or systems, sometimes improvements in methodologies or guidelines; nearly always introduction by training, facilitation, or coaching, using a variety of learning and development techniques.

MDC has extensive experience in designing and developing project management organisation structures, processes and systems. These can be documented in traditional or in user friendly on-line form. More importantly perhaps, we have considerable expertise in working with project staff to develop their individual competencies, build team spirit and develop a performance culture throughout the extended project team.

Implementation & Value Improvement Activities

The implementation of major projects or organisational change is never easy. MDC has worked with many Clients on a wide range of individual projects and development programmes to realise business benefit and minimise risk. Over the course of these development interventions and consulting assignments, we have developed an extremely robust and rigorous methodology, focused on maximising business benefit, making use of the latest techniques in value and risk management and drawing the maximum advantage from the supply chain.

Benchmarking, Re-calibration & Learning from Experience

Periodic measurement of implementation success is vital. To establish the success of the Improvement Strategy, MDC often repeats the Gap Analysis on a regular basis – for example annually. As well as repeat Gap Analyses, MDC is also able to benchmark the improvement activities against best in class. This benchmarking exercise will determine the structure of an ongoing, prioritised continuous improvement and development plan. Whether mid-stream, 'cold eyes' review or post-project 'lessons learned', MDC follows a structured methodology.

The result is a thoroughly documented, systematic assessment of where the organisation's project and programme capability stands and what the implications are to the enterprise in improving future performance. In our experience, the result is always very positive, often uncovering insights not obvious to the general organisation and on which enterprise-wide competency improvement action may need to be taken.