

## Resource type: Project 13

### Work design and wellbeing within integrator roles

This transcript reflects discussion that took place during workshops held by the Project 13 Capable Owner workstream as part of research to understand work design and wellbeing within integrator roles.

#### The integrator role

The first phase of the Capable Owner research identified the need for a new role, which would act as 'integrator' between projects and operations for example. This role would focus on the level of the individual rather than at an organisational level. Discussion revolved around the role of the individual supported by a skilled and capable team and by the upper layers of management, which provide social support. Research participants agreed that the Capable Owner should create an environment for success within which the integrator role can be carried out by multiple people. In this way, the integrator reaps the rewards of the clarity of purpose and therefore can focus specifically on success.

The integrator was viewed as a facilitator of collaboration. Two points of integration were identified: first, integration within the owner organisation because internally they may not be aligned to what they want and do not have clarity of outcome. Second, the integration of the supply chain to deliver that outcome.

#### Work characteristic components

There is importance in considering a range of work characteristics (motivating, social and contextual) for designing new roles. People have different tolerances for motivating characteristics, something to be aware of when recruiting for example. Three key areas for consideration were identified:

- 1) The need to ensure identification of people who are going to feel comfortable with these motivating characteristics.
- 2) The need to be aware that too much autonomy without enough organisational support can become a demand at a high level.
- 3) The need to pay attention to the interaction between the different work characteristic components.

For example, a very complex job without enough autonomy to do that job well could mean that autonomy becomes 'toxic' at high levels. Whereas if an integrator was given enough support and autonomy to do that role, complexity might not be a problem.

Thinking about the balance and interaction between the work characteristic components given to the role holder is important. The work characteristic components that were most emphasised during research were autonomy, alignment of goals, social and contextual characteristics. The latter discussed in terms of 'the environment' received the most attention as being key for the Capable Owner.

#### The environment the role holder creates and navigates

The Capable Owner role is about the creation of an environment specifically designed to allow individuals vertically and horizontally to be the best they can be. Investors,

Government and the wider infrastructure sector should seek to create the environment around this role holder.

The role holder should think about how to create an environment for a team that is looking for fixity and rigidity, but all the role holder can provide is flexibility and risk. The role holder needs to recognise and facilitate working in ambiguous and uncertain environments. Clarity about what that role holder does and thinks to put in place and allow that role holder to do that. For example, they must think about the managerial support required, the right infrastructures, the right information systems, the right support networks to help enable the role holder to do the demanding tasks that are required.

Collaboration when designing the environment must also be considered. It should be seen as a joint activity rather than an isolated one.. Consideration of involvement of other people, seeking the opinion of different stakeholders within that environment who can provide different perspectives is also important.

### **Job crafting and culture crafting**

Organisations are good at defining job descriptions but tend to get social interactions wrong. They are perhaps not very good at creating an environment of establishing the social and behavioral interlinks that are required. Vertical creation is natural and organisations do not tend to work horizontally. Hence the 'boundary spanner' idea is the bit that is so often missing, the bit where good collaboration takes place.

The job is often shaped by the individual. For example, an owner might have a clear idea of what they want in terms of achievements, outputs, and competencies required for the role holder. But at appointment the role is driven by the individual's personality and the culture they create is driven by their personality, interaction with the environment and the relationships they have with their peers.

This is part of the leadership culture. Therefore, getting the social factors understood and aligned is equally as important as getting the job description and the vertical structures right. A lot of wellbeing can be generated by working in teams which want to work together in a way where everybody is working for everybody. This came naturally; it was not forced.

It is about having the social context and organisational support right. The creation and design of the support network is interesting because networks are often overlooked and tasks and efficiency are usually considered more important factors. More consideration to the design and creation of the support network would be beneficial.