



Insight

PUBLIC SECTOR

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INVESTIGO | Recruiting talent.



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Welcome to the 7th edition of our Insight Magazine where this time we shine a light on Government.

As someone who actively networks across multiple sectors, I've been excited by what I've seen across the public sector throughout 2018. There is real investment in talent, continuous improvement, innovation and general upskilling and upscaling across the board. This sector is taking great strides forward, in comparison to others who are less innovative and slower to embrace change. Some may say that the public sector had a lot of catching up to do and this may be true in part. The industry, however, seems to have recognised this and reacted strongly, which demonstrates great strength of character.

In 2018, we launched our Public Sector Consulting practice which focuses on offering solutions to our network and being flexible in the type of service we can offer. Generally, we have seen a shift in the market, whereby multi-faceted and skilled teams are required in relatively short time frames and significant

value is still required across the board. This allows organisations like Investigo to truly partner and support key organisations and thereby become a true extension of them.

This edition provides insight into how a Government Commercial Continuous Improvement Director drives change, a transformation at DfE (Department for Education), the challenges around agile delivery, and the ever-important market update. As always, if you would like to be involved in the next edition or you would like to reach out to me please do so.



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Claire Benham's career has gone full circle from her post graduate desires of Civil Service. With vast experience in procurement in the private sector, she has now taken on her greatest challenge as the Commercial Director of the Department for Education. Here Claire talks openly about the challenges she has faced, transferable skills and the huge opportunity for procurement professionals in the DfE.

I graduated university with a politics degree and planned on a career in the Civil Service, however this was not to be at that time and I found myself in need of a job. I started working within the buying department of a busy manufacturing company and my career in procurement had begun.

My next position was in a construction business. In this role I was lucky enough to have my first mentor, the Procurement Director, who saw my capability and started me on the CIPS programme. Working in construction was a great grounding for me and demonstrated what procurement could achieve when it's at the forefront of an organisation. It was here, where margins are low and everything you do counts, that you learn those tough lessons that will serve you throughout your career.

Following this, I joined Barclays - a world apart from where I had been previously and a very exciting opportunity. At this time Barclays had no procurement function, so it was completely greenfield. I was assigned to Barclaycard and from day one, I spent a huge amount of my time educating people on what could be achieved with strong procurement capability. However, the industry was booming, Barclaycard had the biggest market share and the most innovative product. They didn't feel they needed us, and they

weren't interested in re-investing - it was going to be tough change their minds.

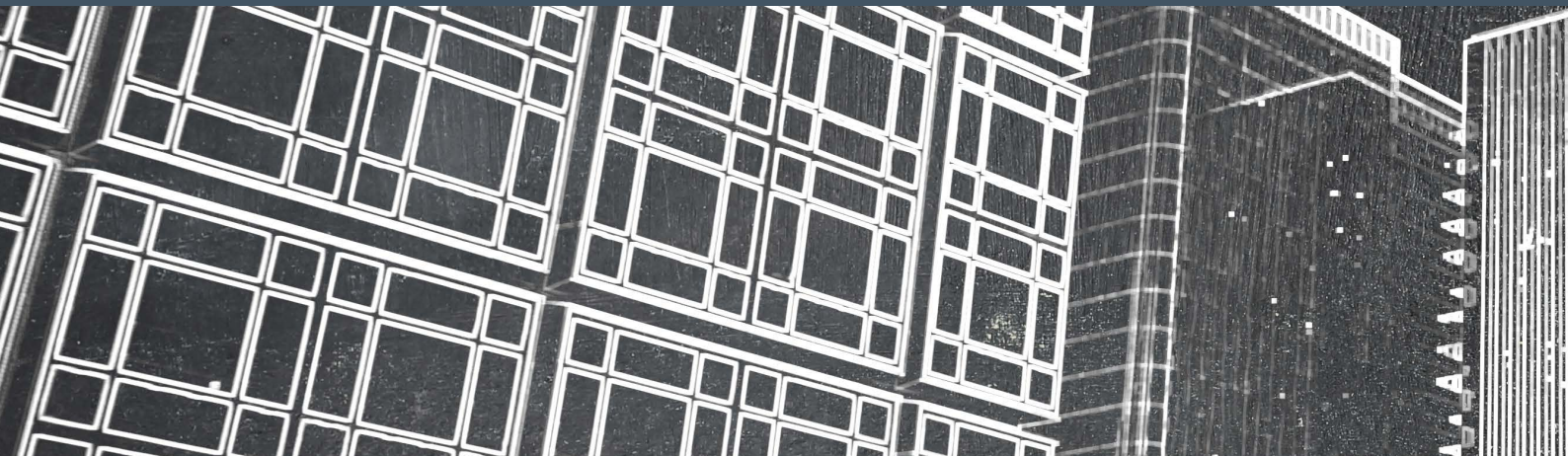
Adapting to Banking and Barclays

In order to adapt, you need to take time to understand the market, get into the detail of new categories and figure out who your key players are. I believe all our technical competencies in procurement are totally transferrable, you just need to learn the sector. If people have a good technical base and the right support network around them, there is no reason why we can't change specialism, categories or move between the private and public sector, throughout our career.

Building relationships

We quickly identified those people who could get you a 'seat at the table' and worked hard to build good relationships with them. We were able to demonstrate small things that could be achieved and aimed to get to a place where they couldn't work without us.

I really wanted to push the opportunity for re-investment. They were less interested in the bottom line, but they enjoyed the extra money and that got them hooked. As time went on and new players came into the market, they had to innovate if they



wanted to maintain and grow market share. Overtime, Barclays had created an enormous cost base and suddenly it needed to do something about it, so when the discussions came from the top, we were ready to support. This gave us the opportunity to have the more strategic conversations.

Biggest learning curve

I have been fortunate enough to have experienced many learning curves over the years, but during my time at Barclays, outsourcing and offshoring became a major topic. From a personal development perspective this was huge for me and I was lucky enough to be at the forefront of this drive for Barclays. I travelled the world, worked on some incredibly exciting projects and was given the opportunity to work on setting up a joint venture in India. I was really stretching my commercial competence and learning a vast amount, which was incredibly rewarding.

What was interesting was the opportunity to learn from our mistakes. Barclays risk appetite was high, so you felt you could test the boundaries and learn from what didn't work. This was an invaluable experience in understanding 'make vs buy'.

The pivotal moment

In 2008 I was offered a role in Dubai. It felt like a serendipitous moment; I was being presented with something that would change my life and the opportunity was immense. At the time I had two young children, so not only was this a significant change in my career, it was also a huge change for my family. However, sometimes it's good to take risks, so I went for it and we all moved out there. The job was a leadership role: to transform an existing function and to head up all the commercial teams in 17 countries across Africa, with expansion across Asia and the Middle East. I had the chance to work with some incredibly talented people - some of them had been neglected (but still really strived to be procurement professionals). I felt they needed someone like me to support and listen to them. I loved being able to professionalise what we did and how we did it.

Adjusting to the culture

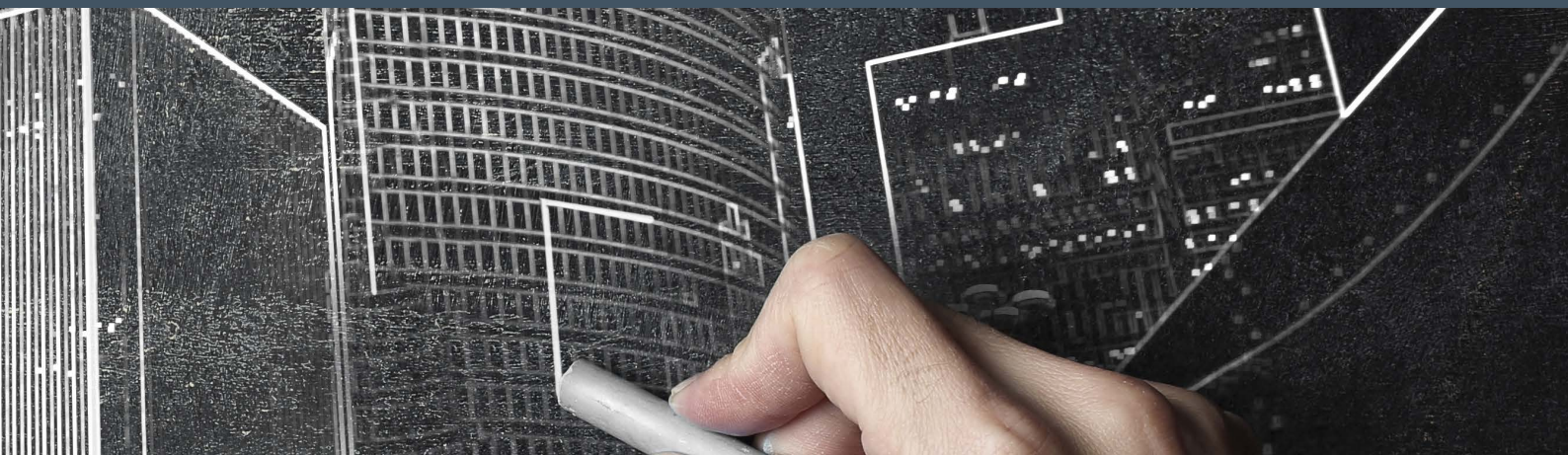
Being a female in a very male dominated environment was incredibly challenging. I learnt a lot about my own resilience. I received so many knock backs from CEOs who were not interested in the message and even less so when it came from a white female that they felt should have no place in their business. There wasn't just one person with this opinion, there were 17 of them who all felt that I didn't belong - I felt like I was banging my head against a brick wall. As before, it was down to relationships - I had to find the hooks that got people to partner with us. Fortunately we had a couple of instances where there was a serious failure in our supply chain which created an opportunity for me to demonstrate what we were able to do and show the value we could add.

Balancing family life

It has not been easy. With no family close by for day-to-day assistance, I'm totally reliant on external childcare. At times it felt terrible and that the balance was wrong. There were occasions when my career became more important; I went through moments when I lost who I was and found life very difficult. You can't, however, get it right all the time and I don't think we should beat ourselves up. The key is recognising when you haven't got it right and reacting. When we came back from Dubai, I realised that living out of a suitcase was amazing for my career but shocking for my family. I recognised it, made a decision and looked to redress the balance. At this point I felt I needed to take some time out. I needed to reconnect with my family and work out what's next. That's how I ended up in the Public Sector.

Entering Public Sector

I was seeking something different and I wanted to give something back. The Government Commercial Organisation was coming to the forefront and, having tried to go into Public Sector after University, it just felt like the right move. The Universal Credit programme at DWP really fitted my knowledge and skill set. Although I hadn't had experience within the sector, I had the



right technical competence to deliver on one of the Governments largest reform programmes. It was a massive learning curve, both in terms of the sector and how the department works.

In the public sector, the rules are different, how we buy is different. We can still be creative and have category management, however we have to operate within certain frameworks. It is hard to find comparison within the private sector that has the same scale, complexity and such a fundamental impact on society.

Joining the Department for Education

I was really attracted to the transformation - it was the opportunity to build something which is at the heart of the department, as well as something that will make a significant difference. I've been given the opportunity to deliver a step change in capability, capacity and be a part of Gareth Rhys-Williams' vision to be the best commercial function in the world.

We are striving for world class education, training and care for everybody, whatever your background. People see the department as just education, but it's so much more than that. It's about social care, disadvantage and disability and early years intervention and being at the heart of the community.

If we can create this, we will have a more productive economy, giving everyone the chance to succeed. It's much more holistic than someone sitting their GCSEs, this is about our children and the future of society, it's such an incredibly important topic.

The procurement opportunity at DfE

We are building a great commercial function and fully embedding category management and have some incredibly exciting projects on the agenda. A key venture is building new schools for the future and ensuring that current schools are maintained to high standards. This is a huge opportunity for people in the construction and facilities sector to come and work with us. We are one of the largest, if not the largest construction buyers in the UK.

Within our schools' commercial team, we have a £1 billion challenge around influencing how schools spend their money. We want to give them access to great deals and build category management across this landscape, to really support them in making the most of the budget they have. We will continue to look at new ways to drive commercial value and are currently looking at building a digital platform so that schools can access deals easily. We have recently launched the Supply Teachers Framework, a ground-breaking concept which allows schools to source supply teachers at a significantly reduced margin. This again, could be market impacting. Those who join now will be involved from the start and become part of a significant and vast journey. People here are so passionate about what we can achieve, in a sector that can shape the future of our economy.

Building your team

I'll be forming new teams who support each area effectively. I've created lots of roles with a delivery focus, as well as looking for strong leaders who will be both sector and category aligned. I want people with a good technical background, but I'm looking for a broad range; from those early on in their career all the way up to established. They don't need to know about education, but they need to be passionate about the sector and be ready to learn.

It's an incredibly inclusive department, with such energy and passion. We are flexible around working patterns and we are trying to be an exemplar across Government, by creating an environment where people can work around their circumstances. We are championing being a national employer and I'm very excited about what we can do here and believe this is somewhere to come and build a career.

We have a fantastic training programme and we really value these roles, so there are allowances for qualifications and people that can add value to what we want to create. The next 12 months is so critical to change and creating something special.



Career Snapshot

Mark Roberts has had extensive experience in procurement in the private sector, from huge multi-national corporations to start-ups. In his latest role, Mark is at the heart of the public sector as the Government Commercial Continuous Improvement Director, driving change and adding value. Mark explains what his role entails and how his department influences the spend of a vast budget.

I was brought in to establish and drive a continuous improvement mentality across the Government's commercial function - it is about improving and ensuring we drive value throughout. The challenge of the role is to review what we are currently doing and highlight improvement opportunities whilst being mindful of how we present it to the department and other Arms' Length Bodies (an ALB has a role in the process of national Government but is not part of a Government department).

My team is working with all Central Government Departments and their ALB's (The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has over 40) and we are excited to go beyond our current relationships in Government and are looking to collaborate with the likes of the Scottish Government and local authorities.

By getting a community of people working together, across organisations of different size, scale and complexity on a regular basis, we are able to share our learnings with all those bodies looking to partner with us.

Whilst I lead the continuous improvement initiative, the teams' origins lie in how we spend money across Government. The Cabinet Office spend controls processes are an important part



'If we can get a community of people working together...then we could have some exciting things to discuss...we are passionate about having these conversations.'

of my responsibilities where we are required to assure all consultancy requests and business case to the value of around £10 million. In 2017-18, we assured approximately 420 business cases, to the value of around £64 billion.

Can you provide any examples of these business cases?

The types of projects we review can be varied and fascinating; the diversity of categories include runways, FM projects, technology programmes, space related projects, vaccines, prison expenditure, asylum expenditure and so on. You have to remember that a number of these business cases are for goods or services whereby the Government is the sole buyer, indeed the entire market, within the United Kingdom.

Why did you choose to move to the public sector from private?

I have been very fortunate in my career, from starting at Intel in the 90's to working for other global organisations like Vodafone and Anheuser Busch InBev. I also worked at a Bertelsmann startup where I was required to support the packing and unpacking of books. I apologise now to everyone who may have received one of my wrapped books for Christmas in 1998! This was invaluable experience for me in understanding the supply chain process. I've always looked at the challenge each role presented to me. I looked at each one on merit and I've learnt different lessons from all of them. I took this role because I wanted a big challenge. I wanted something complex and vast with the prospect to drive change, and this role within the Government gave me exactly that. There are very few roles that offer you the opportunity to address £49 billion of spend and have a real effect on it.



'I wanted a big challenge, I wanted something complex and vast with the prospect to drive change.'

What lessons have you learnt in Government?

The main lesson I have learnt and one I continuously share with my team about this sector, although it also applies to other large organisations, is don't wait for everything to be perfect before you begin. Start when you're at 90% and make improvements as you proceed - incremental changes can have a profound effect. For example, we publish a functional dashboard every quarter where we track 12 metrics across departments. Differing priorities meant that every department did not participate from the beginning, but we now have the majority involved from the start of every new Financial Year. If we had waited for all of them to join at the beginning, the project wouldn't have got off the ground - you gather momentum, so those that aren't taking part are asking themselves why.



'...incremental changes can have a profound effect... you gather momentum, so those that aren't taking part are asking themselves why.'

What are you most proud of in the past 2 years?

I'm proud of the team I've built. When I joined, we had several vacancies in the team and they had no leadership. They were really struggling with the workload, so my first six months was spent ensuring our footprint was as it should be. In achieving that we have increased our influence, our scope and people have realised the benefit of the team. As a result, we have been invited into more conversations. We are also taking responsibility for systems across the function and are shaping and influencing strategy. I wouldn't be able to do my role without a team that are able to build very good relationships.



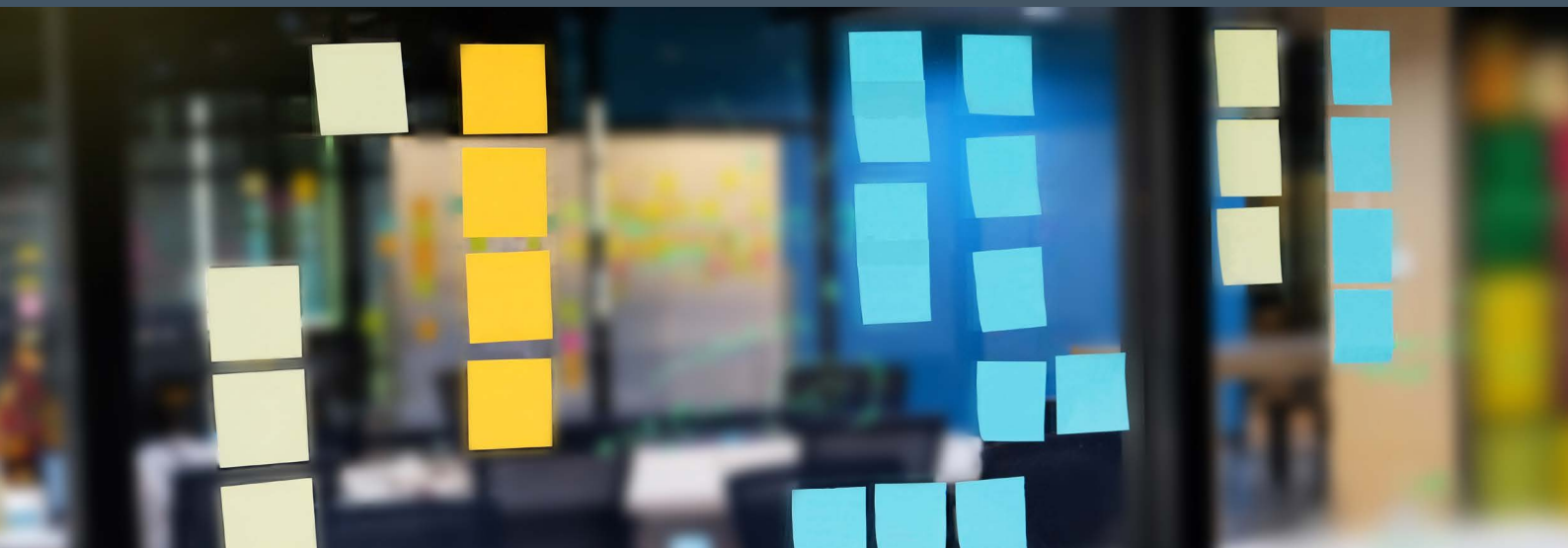
'...we have increased our influence, our scope and people have realised the benefit of the team.'

What is your management style?

I actively push my team to take informed risks - we are not going to get better without doing so. We have to be visible or our influence will not be felt. We need to challenge constructively on current ways of working in order to make improvements going forward.

The Cabinet Office has not always been positively perceived - what are your views?

There are always challenges with any central structure and the organisations it interacts with. A major challenge is with what role a central structure fulfils. In my previous organisation, a Zone President told the Global organisation that we should never say we are there to help business units. He told us that the Global structure should be about leadership and setting direction. I had this debate in my interview when I used this example. From my own personal experience in this role, I ask my team to do both, leading where appropriate and helping when necessary as I have realised from experience that any role in a Central structure should flex to the demands placed upon it.



Emma Mulqueeny OBE discusses agile public services and whether this is the final frontier. With the enthusiasm for designing services around the continually evolving user needs, the challenge of measuring delivery against business cases is increasingly apparent. Emma also assesses the need for hybrid service designers who can work fluently between front to back, up and down design.

I took a little break from the public sector around eight years ago, focusing more on smart data challenges across digital estates and the necessary evolution of education. During the last year or so I have begun to engage once again in a number of public sector programmes and departments, still on the transformation journey, and discovered a new set of challenges facing transformation teams.

The first thing that is immediately obvious is the explosion in the use of wall space and post-it notes! Agile delivery has broken the gates of Prince 2, at least in the office spaces. There is a genuine enthusiasm for designing services around the user need, with the fluidity required to stop or start things without years of change requests and gateway reviews.

At first glance this was a resounding success for everything Baroness Martha Lane Fox had hoped to do when she wrote her letter to Sir Frances Maude back in 2010: Revolution not Evolution in which she looked to offer advice on “how efficiencies can best be realised through the online delivery of public services,” and how the Government “can use the Internet both to communicate and interact better with citizens and to deliver significant efficiency savings from channel shift.” The full letter can be read [here](#)*. However, once inside, this was not always what I found.

*Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60993/Martha_20Lane_20Fox_s_20letter_20to_20Francis_20Maude_2014th_20Oct_202010.pdf

Agile working is not simply a chaotic way of quickly getting information out the door in little bits of code changes and tweaks (plus post-its). It is a process that relies on a strong surrounding infrastructure that totally supports its freedom of movement and doesn't stifle its response time or ability to pivot. It dramatically reduces the risk of service failure by breaking the delivery points into much shorter chunks and having very clear roles and responsibilities, ceremonies and a manifesto. What it does not do is go beyond what it is there to do - nor should it.

In all the departments and programmes I have come across, there are agile delivery teams successfully developing products that are passing the GDS tests and moving from Discovery to live services. In the technical delivery rooms, it all pretty much runs smoothly (even if approval to use some of the platforms needed: Confluence, Slack and Jira for example, is often pretty impossible to get, at least not quickly).

But where the challenges still lie are in the supporting infrastructures of governance, finance, PMO and live services management. Even in stakeholder engagement and planning stages, clients still want to know what they are getting and when. They expect the associated standards and training to roll out these products. There is still a degree of uncertainty and distrust because of the apparent vagaries of agile development of digital services.

Furthermore, there is a huge increase in demand for agile coaches to help (an increasingly) senior level of management who are unsure of how to adapt and learn to enable this way of working. Confusion around the role of the traditional delivery, operational, assurance and strategy boards and how live services can maintain the same level of agility once a product is deemed ready to move on from its Beta phase, are still very apparent. It would seem traditional governance models have not yet had their revolution.

Finance departments and PMOs struggle to find the right way to marry and measure delivery against business cases that often do not reflect the same final product as originally proposed, because the user behaviour varies in practice. The temptation, in response to this, is to either severely slim down and de-tooth the PMO. Doing so leaves instability in areas such as risk management, formal reporting and finance, all of which are problems the agile teams working on delivering the right product or service, could do without. The alternative response is to ramp up the PMO and give it enormous power to try to alleviate the pressure and constant requests for updates from the delivery teams. However, the PMO model is still the same and it jars with agile delivery.



‘Finance departments and PMOs struggle to find the right way to marry and measure delivery against business cases’

Every single person I have worked with in all these areas has been more than keen to work in the ‘new’ way. They want to support the status quo and develop the skills needed or bring in the right coaches and specialist staff. There is, however, an undercurrent of desperation, and anxiety, as no one has a clear overview or oversight of how this works end-to-end and top-to-bottom.

This anxiety seems to have spawned a new requirement for a kind of hybrid service design/business architecture specialism. These hybrid service designers are the only people I have seen who really have the skills to create a methodology to address this need, which is very difficult to articulate. How can you ask for a solution to a problem that is best described as “We have a slightly anxious feeling, and no one really knows why, please can you help?”

One could argue that business architecture alone fulfils this role, but I have not yet seen it working to resolve all of the challenges that come with agile working as there still remains a weirdly shaped hole full of uncertainty. It is my belief that the hybrid service designers are the final piece of this puzzle and should

be a part of the roles and responsibilities description of agile teams working in the public sector (or indeed any large organisation with complex governance and a responsibility to deliver products and services).



‘For me, these hybrid service designers are the new wave of geeks that the public sector needs immediately.’

Most people imagine service designers to be glorified UX people and see them very much at the interface between service user and agile development team. But where they are increasingly in demand is front to back, up and down design. They are uniquely positioned to design the infrastructure needed to enable user-centred agile product development, as well as to tackle the challenges around governance, live service management, the role of the PMO and how finance departments can operate in this space with the same level of accountability and scrutiny.

For me, these hybrid service designers are the new wave of geeks that the public sector needs immediately. Ten years ago, it was people who could work with data, who understood how to produce digital tools and services at a fraction of the cost, with reduced risk and higher rate of take up. Baroness Martha Lane Fox, Sir Frances Maude, Mike Bracken and GDS made that happen against all odds eight years ago, and it is nothing short of astounding to see how it works now in Government. HMRC are exemplars of the agile development of services.



‘We need to bring in a more hybrid service - skilled designers focusing on operational challenges around governance and assurance.’

To address this final clash between traditional and agile, which brings about this intangible feeling of anxiety and insecurity, we need to bring in a more hybrid service - skilled designers focusing on operational challenges around governance and assurance. They need to be the ones at the forefront of public sector conferences, technical groups and on stages. They need to be sharing their work and providing as many best practice models as they can. They need to be looking to re-skill, love finding order in chaos but aren’t scared of a pivot here and there. I think this will make the post-it note budget begin to realise a tangible ROI.



Simon Shobrook discusses mass supplier frameworks and portal driven procurements have left some public sector stakeholders frustrated by the scoping challenges, slow deployment of services and a race to the top for costs in niche services such as DevOps.

The demand in Government for skills and expertise driven by the needs of ongoing essential infrastructure programmes and EU Exit could see the UK enter a war for talent on a scale not seen since the late 90s. The Big 4, management consultancies and systems integrators are feasting on the uncertainty of EU Exit, whilst having also consumed other transformation programme budgets including ESMCP, HMCTS Reform, NLEDS, MOD and NHS Digital to name a few.

It has been widely reported in the mainstream press that the Cabinet Office awarded £75m worth of contracts to the 'big' consultancies for EU Exit related work. Government spend and contract awards are in the public domain, so anyone working in this sector knows this is the tip of the iceberg.

There is increasing pressure on already strained budgets across Government, so large consultancies delivering services, that morph into 'land and expand' body-shop models, including contract resources on gross profit margins of 50-60% are drawing increased scrutiny. In some cases this has already been demonstrated to be costly and unsustainable.

Mass supplier frameworks and portal-driven procurements have left some public sector stakeholders frustrated by project scoping challenges, slow deployment of services and a race to the top for costs

in niche services such as DevOps, Service Design and User Research. With increasing pressure on budgets, buying overpriced resources because "it's an easy supply channel", no longer justifies these routes for resource-led delivery.

Skills shortage, budget constraints, EU Exit and with IR35 thrown into the mix, make this an extremely challenging market for buyers and stakeholders in the public sector. What can public bodies do to reduce their overall spend and/or obtain better value from their spend?

Resource-led delivery as a managed service or call-off agreements, balanced with core civil service teams and specialist vendors/suppliers offer an alternative. Working with a trusted associate model offers access to the same quality of skills and experience, with more flexibility of change team profiles and without the conflict of interest caused by utilisation targets of bench driven supplier businesses.

Public bodies can realise 50% savings on costs compared with body-shopped resources from SIs and major consultancies. We would advise to ask them to compete for and win turn-key solutions, support contracts, platform builds, fixed price consultancy. Don't let them build client-side teams for project delivery, development, change management and



commercial transition work. This approach requires a strong partnership between the supplier and civil service stakeholders to keep the teams lean and focused on delivery.

Investigo's offer:

The Investigo Public Sector Consulting team provide a 'consultancy lite' approach, offering excellent service and agility at a competitive price. This approach enables us to erode the traditional domain of the large management consultancies and systems integrators, whilst offering the same outcomes, the same skills and in many cases a better fit with more flexibility on scope and significant cost savings.

We have developed and deployed our Managed Service Provider (MSP) model to work client-side and help our clients manage Commercial and Project and Programme delivery. As a result, our client stakeholders have realised reduced costs, quick access to the expertise to help manage complex major programmes and improved performance management.

Investigo offer experienced account managers to build and deploy teams to deliver statements of work. We carry out clear and open contract management processes, with onsite leads to support performance management. We operate a buddy system to improve induction times and build close relationships with the vetting team to help manage clearance transfers. We also work closely with our customers to develop and deliver free 'Lunch and Learn' training sessions to transfer knowledge to civil service teams to ensure they have the skills to ensure continuity of services after we have completed work-packages. Alongside this we offer a flexible pricing model for the stakeholders to allow for capped T&M and fixed price delivery.

- ✓ Rapid onboarding and deployment of resources
- ✓ Access to trusted security-cleared resources
- ✓ Ability to flex team skills and scale without penalty
- ✓ VFM - realising significant cost savings and quantified added value
- ✓ Efficiency and quality improvement by working with a single supplier
- ✓ Performance management - fast formal and informal support to ensure high quality outcomes
- ✓ Regular accurate reporting for spend forecasting and tracking
- ✓ 'Lunch and learn' sessions to transfer knowledge
- ✓ Social value inclusion events including D&I, charity fundraising and mental health initiatives.

Client-side teams, that are 'on-mission' with the public sector, drive value from major procurements, providing assurance and focus on delivery rather than just the expansion of on-site teams. Our onsite teams have no sales or account development targets.

This transition to a new way of delivering on key requirements does require commitment and investment from senior stakeholders and SROs. However, with early market engagement, a structured process and support from experienced commercial teams, the outcome and supplier relationship can reap great rewards for the organisations and the public.

To hear more about our work with Government departments and agencies or to discuss how Investigo could assist with your requirements please contact Simon Shobrook.

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Market Update

by Michael Thornton

Of late, we could say that providing recruitment solutions to the Government has mirrored the tumultuous times they themselves are experiencing. With what seems an increasingly frenzied approach to Brexit with its fast approaching deadline, clients are struggling to get the required resources through the doors. The rapid surge of work being created has urgently increased the demand for individuals with appropriate security clearances and relevant IT skills.

Across central Government, the now standard requirement for SC clearance across all departments means that the typically 'secure' departments such as the FCO, Home Office and MOD are competing against the likes of Defra, DFE and DHSC for the increasingly rare SC-cleared contractor. Whilst the expedited clearance process made available by DExEU has significantly sped up the process (to around 4 to 5 weeks), the somewhat chaotic onboarding experience means that this is not happening consistently or efficiently. This also means that skilled contractors who cannot get an SC sponsor are finding it harder to secure a role, especially where previous clearances such as CTC have become somewhat redundant.

On top of clearance issues, we are finding an increasingly disjointed approach to day to day recruitment. The departments who appear to be most impacted by Brexit are perhaps unsurprisingly struggling with the

sheer numbers they need to bring in. The impact of this fractured approach is that they lose out on the higher calibre resources who are frequently exposed to last minute interview reschedules, delayed onboarding and changing briefs. Some of which cannot be helped of course, but it's important not to think it's "just recruitment" and therefore of secondary importance when you consider the workloads that need to be processed.

The 'onboarding' process hasn't been helped by the underwhelming transition from the CL1 to the PSR framework in late 2018. This is a process that has seen increased spend via alternative CCS frameworks rise dramatically across central Government as it appears departments opt for quicker and simpler routes - something the Cabinet Office will no doubt be looking into in their next contingent labour procurement.

In terms of roles, there has been a notable shift with less demand for strategic/long term planning/higher paid resource and increased demand for 'get-the-work-done'/ processing roles as the increased workload ripples out from the Brexit zenith. Policy changes are sending waves across all Government and arm's length bodies in all directions and this means an above-average workload. Whilst this is an expensive process for Government there are some positives: this



is creating opportunities for civil servants and other, sometimes overlooked, permanent staff members to take a step up in responsibility on projects sometimes reserved for consultants or contractors.

Regarding rates and salaries, overall, we are seeing day rates drop slightly. It is likely that this is due to a combination of increased competition and budgets - as well as more people choose contracting as a career choice, budgets are getting squeezed with the cost of Big 4 consultancies rising.

IR35 has well and truly become part of public sector life now with some organisations adopting somewhat dubious blanket policies. Other organisations, however, try to accurately portray what a contractor may be working on with them to give a broader response. This means that organisations continue to be creative with what they are now using contingent resource for and how they are engaging it. A positive outcome of this is the increased added value that a true consultant can add through SoW engagements.

The Chancellor's autumn budget, headlined as the 'end of austerity', could prove the low watermark in Government spending. This should read as good news for contractors and consultancies, although arguably the Brexit spend has already seen to that. As is usual in times of doubt or near recession, the market expects

more money to be pumped into R&D and Science and Technology as the Government looks to stimulate the market. Investigo have already had senior level conversations with some key areas looking to start major programmes in these fields.

Overall, from a contractor and consulting perspective the Government market is very buoyant, albeit somewhat chaotic. What happens post-29th March 2019, in the 'New World' as the Cabinet Office call it, is anyone's guess. The likelihood, it appears to us, is that things will tick on across Whitehall as the real workload begins.

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INVESTIGO 2019 CHARITY PARTNER

Panathlon



Panathlon Challenge is a charity which benefits 18,000 disabled young people each year in Mini-Paralympic type sports competitions across the country. Panathlon focusses on reaching one of the most disadvantaged groups in the country - disabled children who are:

- > Twice as likely to be physically inactive than their non-disabled peers (Source: Sport England)
- > Twice as likely to live in poverty (Children’s Society).
- > At greater risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness (Activity Alliance).

Panathlon provides a competitive sporting pathway for various age ranges, impairment groups and appropriate sports, which enables local grass roots competitions - right through to national finals in prestigious venues such as the Olympic Park in London and also Stoke Mandeville, the home of the Paralympics.

Recent independent research from the University of East London concluded Panathlon improves self-confidence, motivation, social development and physical and mental well-being of those taking part.

“Until the day Panathlon came to school, neither we as parents or the school realised what disabled children

could do. Panathlon opened our eyes.” Rebecca Lock, Parent.

Liz Johnson is the charity’s Paralympic Ambassador, having won three medals at the Athens, Beijing and London Paralympics said;

“I’ve been involved with the Panathlon charity for over ten years now and am delighted to see it grow across the country and benefit thousands of children with disabilities who are more often than not, denied access to sporting competitions. I’m also delighted that during this time Panathlon has created a swimming programme that now enables thousands of young children with disabilities to get into the water, many for the first time.”

Panathlon aims to grow to involve every county in the country by 2020 and benefit 20,000 young people and new charity funds from Investigo will help that growth to new areas and add more provision in existing places as well.

If you would like to be part of Investigo’s charity fundraising events in 2019, then please contact Lisa Holberton at lisa.holberton@investigo.co.uk.

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