

# Benefits Ownership

Welcome to Blog 4 in our series on benefits. We have covered some really useful thoughts, experiences, hints and tips on benefits in our other blogs and today, the focus is on benefits ownership. If you haven't caught our other blogs, you can get to them through the links below:

- Benefits identification
- Dependencies
- Measuring Intangible Benefits
- Ownership
- Realisation

Today we're going to discuss the meaning of ownership, how it changes over time and go through an example. We will also look at what's required for a handover and why it is important to keep the chain of evidence / golden thread from project concept all the way to benefits realisation.

## What do we really mean by ownership?

Benefits ownership means different things to different people, but for the purposes of this blog, we are going to define ownership as the person responsible for the benefit, at that specific phase of the project / programme.

## It's a marathon, not a sprint

Your project could run for a decade or more and in which case, the ownership of the benefits could change multiple times as people move roles, get promoted or the project. It may be more like a marathon than a sprint, but there is still a handover of responsibility and you definitely don't want to drop that baton mid race!



A good handover needs to include all the information found in a good benefit profile. If you are the person taking over responsibility for the benefit, you need to know what type of benefit you're responsible for, when it is due to be realised and the measures / metrics you need to meet. You will also need to know the dependencies for the benefit and the incremental benefits you can achieve as certain outcomes are met. Our Blog on **Dependencies** covers this.

Today, I am going to use the analogy of an eco-house and the benefits you get from building and living in one. In this analogy we now have the build of the eco house approved and work has started

on the build. The Project Manager may be identified as the Operational benefit owner. There may be triple glazed windows, a heat reclamation system, solar roof panels or batteries for storing energy to be fitted; whatever they are, the responsibility for ensuring they are in and working correctly falls to the Operational benefits owner, in this case the Project Manager. Once the house is built and sold, the owner of the house then becomes responsible for the benefits. The Project Manager moves on to the next job, he / she will not be responsible for the realisation of the benefits.

Just because a house has sustainable technology incorporated into the build, it does not mean that the benefits in consumption or in selling energy back to the Grid will be realised. If the owner leaves



all the lights on, the heating on and regulates temperature by opening windows, the benefits will not be realised. The owner is responsible for ensuring that the whole system (people, process and technology) works in harmony and as designed to achieve the outcomes and the benefits. In any department or business, this is also true. A good handover from the project / programme to the operational department responsible for realising the benefits, is expected. This needs to include information such as the benefits to be realised, the measures and metrics to show how they are being achieved and the handover of the knowledge (processes, behaviours and technology) to enable the benefits.

## **Protect the evidence**

Part of the reason that many projects and programmes are not successful in achieving their benefits, is that such a long period of time has lapsed between the initial benefits identification and the

realisation by the operational departments responsible, the chain of evidence is not kept current or



is lost. The project has normally finished and the assumption is that the benefits will take care of themselves, or be realised whatever happens. As we see in our next Blog, this is often a mistake. Over time, the business case is often forgotten, left in a desk drawer or electronic file, gathering real or metaphorical dust. It is vital to keep track of the chain of evidence; from concept, to business case, to product, to outcome and to eventual realisation of benefits.

So, we have spoken about ownership of benefits, the reason for handover of ownership and the need for a robust chain of evidence (golden thread) from original concept through to benefits realisation. We created the analogy of the eco house to give an example that you can hopefully relate to your own situation.

If you have any concerns over your own benefits, why don't you take advantage of our free Benefits Health Check questionnaire? This will give you a fast and easy way to understand how likely you are to realise the benefits in your project or programme.