

## SUPPLY CHAIN I PARTNERSHIPS

TURNING STRATEGY  
INTO REALITY

JARA's managing director, Jamil Rashid explains how Structured Leadership can help businesses understand why projects fail.

The timely delivery of world-class products is perhaps nowhere more strategically important than in the aerospace and defence industry. Yet it's a sector plagued by constant delays and massive budget overruns.

So where do the problems lie? Was it because your engineers or technicians were doing one thing, when they should be doing something else? Was it the process? Was it the customers fault? Was it misalignment between management? The single greatest recurring problem for managers is 'not knowing'.

In the recriminations that take place, the blame is typically laid at someone else's door. Typically, to find out what is going wrong and how to fix it, a business might try to dig up information about previous projects, factor in opinions and perceptions of key staff and carry out a number of assessments. Then it will come up with a raft of improvement activities and projects.

However, the mistake that many businesses make is that they haven't understood the extent to which any of these actually contribute to the problem. Therefore they don't actually know how 'fixing' them will improve milestone achievement or adherence to budgetary targets. The problem is that existing processes of investigation often do not give managers the right information to pinpoint problem areas precisely. This means that a whole bunch of unnecessary and expensive 'improvement activities' are put in place which do nothing to fix the issues.



Jamil Rashid: Managing director, JARA

So what can managers do? The answer lies in instituting systems that give senior managers genuine visibility, control and information, and which also give the people at the coal face the ability to articulate concisely the true reasons for the problems they face. We are often asked how JARA's Structured Leadership process is used in engineering and development. In complex engineering environments, a key part of it is fixing the investigation process. We start by getting the teams from the various areas to understand, validate and agree on where the problems really lie.

Whether you use this process or not, you will need to: Establish control of day to-day work by understanding how daily problems actually link to overall performance; Implement systems that provide daily feedback to the engineers and their teams rather than monthly

reviews of performance or when major milestones are due; Create an environment in which the individuals understand and can clearly see how what they do on a day-to-day level, impacts on the performance of the business; Ensure that project plans are broken down to a level of detail that can be reviewed easily and frequently, and which provides instant feedback on the level of adherence and the actual causes of poor performance; Implement a system to further validate the reasons given for poor performance – often the supposed causes are not the true issues that need dealing with; Involve the whole team in reviewing their own performance and finding solutions for themselves based on their own analysis.

This process will almost certainly lead to a realisation that you don't need to fix everything. There's no need for more training, there's no need to reorganise, and there's no need to replace awkward customers. Successful implementation of these steps provides the data – the knowledge – which leads to an accurate picture of where problems lie and what really needs fixing. Having systems in place as provided by Structured Leadership, means that organisations can deliver long-term, sustainable improvement and outperform their competitors in an increasingly competitive industry. |

*Jamil Rashid is author of Structured Leadership: Turning strategy into reality – every time, available in 2012.*

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