Kestrel Fact Sheet 7
Typical risks and issues

Purpose of this Fact Sheet

Ultimately the implementation of Kestrel always goes well but over the years we have encountered some occasional and some frequently occurring issues. The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to list these so that existing and potential clients can evaluate whether or not they are likely to encounter them and seek our advice where appropriate. None of these are a disaster but some can certainly cause problems and delays.

The risks and issues can be grouped into the following themes:

- Organisational
- Approach to improvement
- Technical
- Procurement

Organisational

(1)   Lack of understanding about any or all of the following at a senior, middle and/or junior level in the organisation:
  (a)   Why operational performance is important
          (it is the number one driver of customer satisfaction)
  (b)   What the real levels of operational performance are
          (as experienced by the customer)
  (c)   Whether things are getting better or worse
  (d)   The main causes of delays and cancellations

(2)   More interest in meeting the target than understanding any of the above and improving as a result

(3)   Over-simplistic and uninformative Dashboards

(4)   Overly complicated visualisations that are impossible to interpret

(5)   A lack of appropriate improvement skills across the organisation

(6)   Endless amounts of data, no useful management information

Approach to improvement

(1)   No Performance Manager or Performance Team
          (or they are present but in name only and busy doing other things)
          There are a number of must-have roles if you're serious about improvement

(2)   No Performance Improvement Process
          i.e. no process for identifying and steering performance improvement projects

(3)   A preference for tables and clever graphs over the four tried-and-tested data display tools (we've deliberately not said what the four are)

(4)   Inability to analyse resulting in not knowing what the data is telling you

(5)   No link between data and improvement (i.e. through analysis). A preference instead
          for pursuing pet theories and quick fixes (with no measureable impact on performance
          as a result)

(6)   Much more effort goes into mitigation and reporting than improvement

(7)   A lack of improvement and data skills in the Performance Team

(8)   A lack of operational knowledge in the Performance Team

(9)   The misconception that it's the Performance Team's job to improve performance rather
          than the whole organisation

Technical

(1)   Not involving the right IT people early enough in the project

(2)   Not understanding the data sources available or finding out who knows what about them

(3)   Not starting work on the provision of the data sources early enough

(4)   Other suppliers being obstructive (and/or expensive) in their provision of data sources
          or interfaces

(5)   "We love our Data Warehouse and the software that comes with it and everything
          must be done through that"

(6)   "I can do that" (in Tableau, Business Objects or similar)

(7)   The organisation is already committed to a Big Data/Business Intelligence project or
          solution and operational performance is lost or delayed in the generality of this

(8)   Over-specification of functionality rather than letting us use our experience and do the
          hard work for you

(9)   A lack of operational, performance and improvement knowledge and skills in the IT team

(10)   Delays due to the perfect data source becoming available 'soon'.
          We have never worked with an organisation that doesn't already have enough suitable
          data to keep it busy improving for the next 5 years.

(11)   Getting hung up on the next big technology thing rather than using what is already
          available and making some improvements that the customers will notice

(12)   Thinking Kestrel is an IT project when actually it's all about improving performance

Procurement

(1)   The procurement process can drag on for months, sometimes years, while the customers
          continue to suffer poor service

(2)   There are plenty of suppliers who can provide IT systems but not many who have the
          triumvirate of expertise in operational performance, organisational improvement and
          IT

uic

(3)   Applying large-scale (multi-million $/£) procurement and compliance processes to something that is actually quite straightforward and small-scale with low reputational risk. The risks of providing a poor service to customers are far greater.

(4)   There are plenty of 'can do anything' systems available. Given operational performance is the number one driver of customer satisfaction, it is worth procuring something specialist.

Note

If any of these sting a bit when you read them, take note!