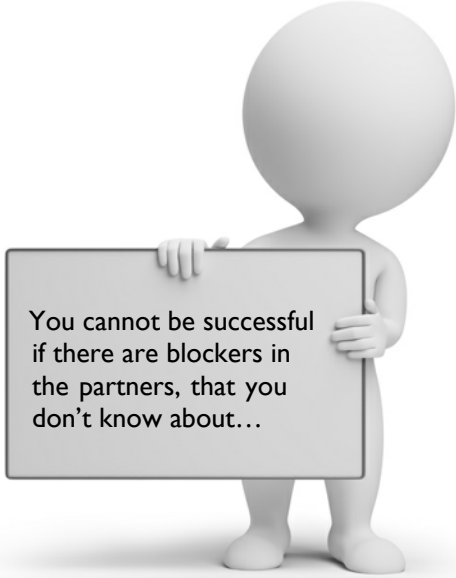


## ANALYSING THE COMMITMENT STATUS WITHIN EACH PARTNER

This tool facilitates a discussion between the workgroup to identify the level of in-house resistance to the project within each partner organisation.

This will enable the group to work collaboratively to create plans that will convert the resistance into positive support - preferably of “champion” status.



You cannot be successful if there are blockers in the partners, that you don't know about...

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[Dominic.Wallace@sharedservicearchitects.co.uk](mailto:Dominic.Wallace@sharedservicearchitects.co.uk)

...or phone Dominic on 0333 939 8909



These are pathway seminars to the Postgraduate Certificate in Collaborative Transformation at Canterbury Christ Church University

# Tool: T&V2.07

## ANALYSING THE COMMITMENT STATUS WITHIN EACH PARTNER

*There is little point in any members of a shared service initiation workgroup pretending there is full support for a shared service back at base, when it is not true.*

Tool T&V2.07 facilitates a discussion between the workgroup to identify the level of in-house resistance to the project within each partner organisation.

This will enable the group to work collaboratively to create plans that will convert the resistance into positive support - preferably of “champion” status.

### **It's okay to talk about in-house resistance**

There is little point in any members of a shared service initiation workgroup pretending there is full support for a partnership back at base, when it is not true. The other partners will be working under the perception that all is well, which is unfair to them<sup>1</sup>.

In-house resistance is normal, but it has to be addressed before the business case is developed for two reasons:

Firstly, the collaboration will collapse if some of the partners find out they have been giving strong commitment to a project, in ignorance of a lack of in-house commitment from others.

Secondly, a partner with in-house resistance is working “in denial” if they do not develop plans to address the problem.

We discovered in our work that frequently the causes of the resistance were common<sup>2</sup> to most partners and could be resolved most effectively through a joint workgroup approach. Sometimes a visit from one partner to another to discuss the issues can resolve these situations.

<sup>1</sup> See Tool T&V2.04 which sets up the “house rules” for the workgroup.

<sup>2</sup> Often the resistance came from a lack of understanding of the purpose of a shared service. Improved communications often resolved much of the resistance.

### **Tool T&V2.07 needs to be prefaced with a slight health warning.**

Tool T&V2.07 needs to be used in a “safe, fully confidential” meeting situation where representatives can candidly share the reality of their “back-at-base” support for the shared service under discussion.

In addition, there should be a workgroup wide acknowledgement that it is most unlikely that all of a partner’s departments and key influencers will be on board at the beginning of a shared service journey. Therefore it is not an admission of failure by representatives if there is resistance within an organisation.

It is also important the group agree that using Tool T&V2.07 produces only a current snapshot that will enable planning and change. The discussion is being used to resolve issues and is not a negative statement of reasons why the shared service should not progress.

Once Tool T&V2.07 is set in those contexts, its purpose is to:

- (a) offer an opportunity for a full and frank discussion between partners’ representatives about the perceptions within their organisations of the joint project
- (b) provide a snapshot of the commitment that currently exists
- (c) facilitate the discussions to address the areas of resistance, through joint workgroup activity

There must also be an acknowledgement that some resistance may not be overcome by conversation, especially where the resistance is to posts being cut or geographical relocation.

The tool should be treated as a barometer and revisited regularly to review how the development of in-house support is shifting in each partner.

## Step 2 - Understanding each other

*Critics are those who publicly challenge the minutiae of the project at each stage, but do not block its progress.*

Tool T&V2.07 applies the classic stakeholder matrix to the in-house commitment context. There are four boxes in the matrix - the “champions”, “supporters”, “critics” and “blockers” for each partner.

### How do you evaluate the four categories?

**Champions** are the key people who fully support the progress of the shared service your group are working on. For example they may have appointed a liaison person to support their side of the project or even committed budget to it.

**Supporters** are key people who feel that it could be a good thing if it happened but otherwise are ambivalent about its success. They describe your project as “interesting”, or “maybe something they could eventually learn from”, but at this moment in time do not feel the need to get involved. The problem is that without them the project may not go forward<sup>1</sup>.

**Critics** are those who publicly challenge the minutiae of the project at each stage, but do not block its progress<sup>2</sup>. This could be from the unions who want to know as rapidly as possible the consequences for their members. It could be from opposition politicians who, whilst not against partnership, see an opportunity to snipe at the party in power<sup>3</sup>.

**Blockers** are those people who do not want the shared service to be developed<sup>4</sup>, or who unintentionally create stumbling blocks<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Always be wary when IT makes these statements as they are such a core part of any existing structure they cannot help be effected by almost all shared service projects.

<sup>2</sup> We encountered a chief executive who was openly challenging the progress of a shared service his organisation was not part of. Therefore he could not block its progress, but a lot of time was consumed in countering his influence on key stakeholders. Actually, many of the challenges were very perceptive so in the end he was offered a place on an advisory board as a “critical friend”.

<sup>3</sup> In a shared service project being developed in Yorkshire in 2009, an opposition leader managed to galvanise enough of the incumbent and opposition councillors to vote and stall it until it was clear it was not a take over by the other partner. (Yorkshire Post, 2009)

<sup>4</sup> IDEA (2008) p11. IDEA name these as “professional terrorists” which may be an unhelpful description in terms of building trust and partnership.

<sup>5</sup> We supported an asset management project which overran by six months and eventually failed through loss of interest. The reason it took so long was because one

### How to use this tool:

Tool T&V2.07 facilitates a discussion between the workgroup to identify the level of in-house resistance to the project within each partner organisation. This will enable the workgroup to collaborate and create plans to convert the resistance into positive support.

**Step 1:** Before a workgroup meeting, ask each partner to evaluate their in-house support and fill in the Tool T&V2.07 matrix for their organisation<sup>1</sup>.

**Step 2:** At the, safe, “confidential” meeting each representative in turn, should be given space to share their matrix with the group.

**Step 3:** After everyone one has shared, a discussion should follow on how the resistance of those appearing outside the “champion” box can be tackled.

**Step 4:** Then put in place a plan to tackle the problems. For example inviting non-champions to attend a meeting of the group.

**Step 5:** At the close of the meeting remind everyone of the confidentiality they have committed to.

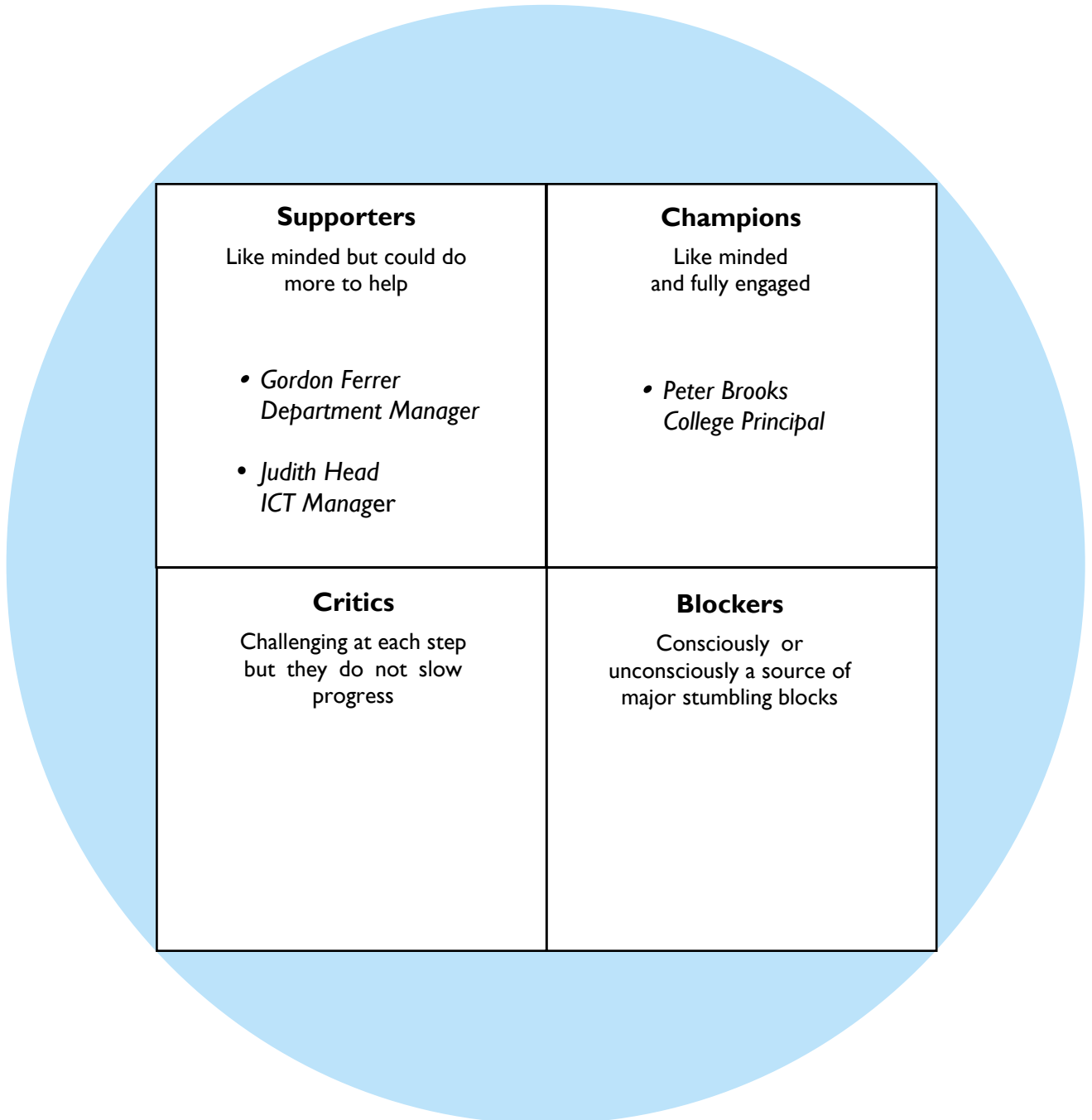
<sup>1</sup> The matrix should give the names of individuals and the reason they appear in that section

If there is a representative at your project group who cannot tell you who falls into these categories back-at-base, then you should suggest they do the rounds and come back to the group with their chart complete.

of the planning departments, which had nothing to lose from the new service, was heavily under-resourced and took weeks to answer each basic information requests, becoming an unconscious blocker of the shared service project.

# Tool: T&V2.07

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# Tool:T&V2.07

## USER LOG

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Project & date tool used	What was the desired outcome of using this tool?	What actually happened?	What would you do differently next time?