pm–partners

Driving best practice delivery with data and teamwork

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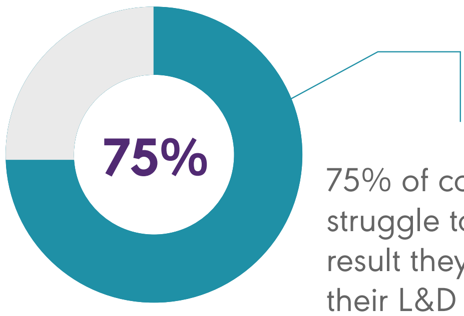
INTRODUCTION

Organisations around the globe understand that the ability to deliver change through projects or agile initiatives is critical to their growth and longevity. Key to success in this sphere are people and the skills and capabilities they possess.

Particularly in today's delivery landscape, continually upskilling individuals and teams is essential. Across all sectors, organisations are grappling with complexity, rapid change, and higher rates of attrition[1]. To drive down risk and cost, improve delivery performance and engage employees, organisations typically focus on aligning the competencies of their people, and the processes and practices they use, with best practice methods and frameworks. These are readily available and proven to work, so in many cases it's simply a matter of choosing one, training your people to execute, and tracking progress.

Or is it? From what we observe - and hear, when clients first come to us - many organisations are failing to see a return on their investment. This disconnect between training and workplace outcomes is especially clear when you look at global research.

In 2020, for example, organisations spent a staggering $525bn on training - an increase of $100bn-plus over the previous 10 years. Yet, 75 per cent of companies struggle to get the result they want from their L&D programs[2]. Likewise, 70 per cent of employees say they do not have mastery of the skills they need for their jobs[3]. While there's no doubt that training is 100 per cent necessary to build the right foundation, in our experience, the problem lies in how these skills are embedded and applied.



75% of companies struggle to get the result they want from their L&D programs.

Source: HBR

Based on our insights from numerous capability uplift engagements, as well as feedback from more than 12,000 learners each year, this paper explores some of the challenges organisations and delivery leaders are up against. More importantly, it shares our advice on how to combat these issues and provides a viable, practical way forward.

Harnessing the power of data and teamwork - and drawing on our broad domain expertise - this flexible approach has been shown to embed new learning and drive incremental performance improvements, while also fostering employee connection. What's more, it's flexible and repeatable, enabling organisations to not only optimise their training investments but scale the process across delivery roles and teams.

Dominic Frost
CEO, PM-Partners

ALIGNING TO BEST PRACTICE

What is 'best practice' for delivery?

Achieving sustainable, delivery excellence is, in theory, quite straightforward. You make every project (or agile initiative) as low risk and repeatable as possible by adopting standardised methodologies, frameworks and consistent tools.

Whether you deliver work using an agile or a traditional project approach, or a blend of both, there are recognised best practice methods and guides to help you. These range from the likes of the Scaled Agile Framework® (SAFe®) and AgileSHIFT® through to PRINCE2® and the *PMBOK® Guide*. There are also specialist methods and guides for areas such as change management (e.g. the Effective Change Manager's Handbook - aligned to the CMBoK), business analysis (e.g. the *BABOK® Guide*), and IT Service Management (e.g. ITIL®).

These methods have a long track record of success, more importantly they are widely available to be taught and shared, and there are experienced people around to help understand the nuances (and potential gaps) they may have.

There may be the need to tweak your chosen method to better suit your delivery environment, but otherwise most organisations pick one (or more) methods or frameworks and use them to start driving consistency.

How do you implement 'best practice'?

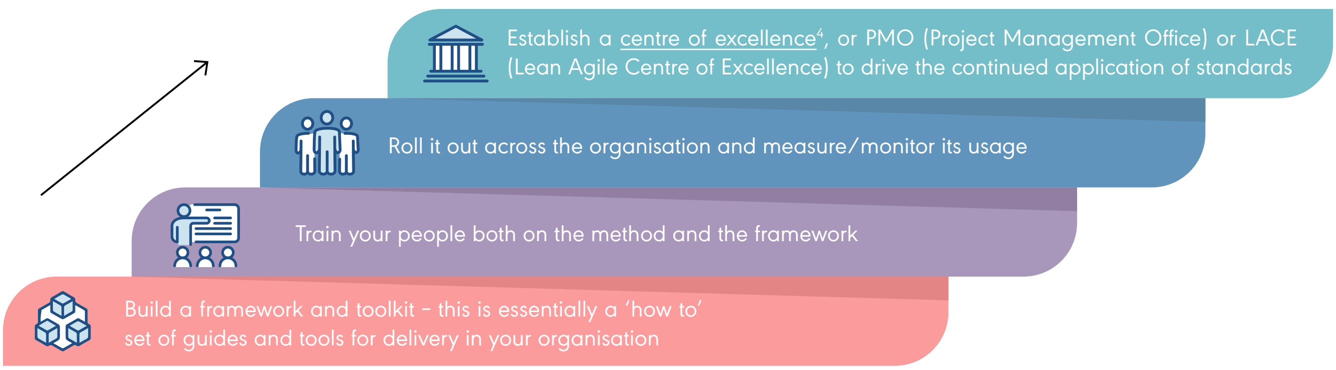
The common approach to implementing best practice involves the following key steps:

Training is 100 per cent essential to ensure your people have the fundamental skills. Without going into too much detail on learning, this would typically entail accredited courses backed up by, for example, micro-learning, refresher courses and 'brown bag' sessions – and should be ongoing to ensure these investments retain their value.

As well as making sure the capabilities of your people are up-to-date and competitive, this commitment also signals to employees that the organisation is serious about driving delivery excellence and providing career pathways (a critical message when 94 per cent of employees[5] will stay longer at an organisation that actively invests in their learning and development).

So far, so good. The problem is, once someone's trained, how do you know whether essential knowledge has been retained, or if the learning has been fully understood and is being embedded and applied correctly? What's more, how can you accurately assess if their skills and competencies have improved and whether, over time, these improvements translate into ROI?

Many organisations struggle to answer the above with any degree of confidence, which is often why they approach us. So, what's holding them back?



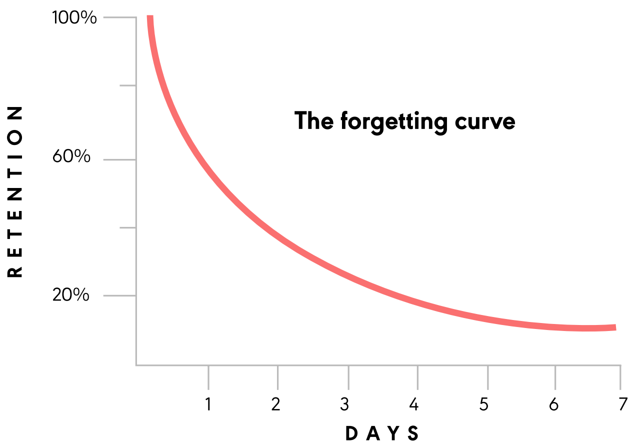
CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

Whether organisations are entirely aware of them or not, there are several common - yet significant - obstacles in their path. Regardless of the size of organisation or type of industry, the following will all impact their ability to embed and drive best practice:

1. The 'forgetting curve'

The unfortunate reality behind any training is that learning is lost if it is not regularly applied and used in the workplace. Hermann Ebbinghaus' 'forgetting curve' has long been used as a visual aid to illustrate the exponential nature of forgetting when no attempts are made to retain the material.

In most cases, we tend to lose as much as 70 per cent[6] of what we learn within 24 hours, while retention of newfound knowledge drops to below 20 per cent[7] after less than a week.



Ebbinghaus also highlighted how regular practice at spaced intervals can promote retention, and numerous studies[8] over the years have added credence to his findings.

This means that organisations that focus on training without supporting their staff with ongoing learning and the practical application of those skills, are wasting an opportunity to improve their team's work performance and capabilities.

> Retention of newfound knowledge drops to below 20 per cent after less than a week.
>
> **SOURCE: Science Direct**

2. The wrong kind of coaching

To beat the 'forgetting curve', embedding and reinforcing new skills with a mix of strategies is the best approach. In this regard, the 10/20/70 model of training, coaching and on-the-job learning is a valuable reference tool. While it is not as widely used as it should be, more organisations are acknowledging the value of coaching and its role in the middle 20 per cent tier (more on the model later).

Delivered in the right way by the right person, coaching can significantly help to embed learning and close skills gaps. More than 70 per cent of people who are coached say their work performance, relationships and communication skills all improved, meanwhile 80 per cent report increased self-confidence[9].

Unfortunately, however, coaching often defaults into more learning where the 'coach' takes too much of the lead and these sessions become more like training sessions. We also frequently see coaching that is not aligned with the right methods or frameworks, and coaches who lack sufficient domain expertise and experience.

To make matters worse, these sessions typically end without a documented plan to ensure the improvements are measured and transparent. Without this, coaching is just advice not taken.

> Coaching often defaults into more learning where the 'coach' takes too much of the lead.

3. Self-assessment bias

Many organisations struggle with where to begin when embedding and improving their alignment to best practice – specifically, which skills and competencies they should focus on and, from there, how they measure progress.

A commonly used approach is to start with some sort of 'audit' or 'skills assessment' to gather data. This typically takes the form of a survey or questionnaire which attempts to gauge individuals' level of skill/competency in certain areas. There are a couple of challenges PM-Partners regularly sees with this approach:

i) FUD – Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt

People receive an email link for a survey and, regardless of how much communication precedes it, this immediately raises red flags: 'What's this information being used for? Is it part of my annual appraisal? Will it impact my prospects for promotion? The list goes on.

ii) The Dunning-Kruger effect

Based on a paper by two Cornell University psychologists, the Dunning-Kruger effect suggests that those with the fewest skills in a certain area are more likely to overestimate their competence[10]. This is attributed to a lack of self-awareness which prevents them from assessing their skills objectively. The theory also suggests that high performers tend to underestimate their skills and knowledge[11]. The upshot is that all self-assessments are naturally flawed.

Despite these issues however, the concept of measurement is something to be embraced. As the adage says, 'If you can't measure it, you can't improve it.' It's the approach that's wrong... and without the right data to guide your L&D programs, coaching and other embedding activities typically lack purpose. This may explain why rather than reflecting overall company priorities, only 40 per cent of organisations say that their learning strategy is aligned with organisational goals[12]. For 60 percent, then, learning has no explicit connection to strategic objectives. As we'll explain later, it's both what you measure and how you measure it that's important.

> For 60 per cent [of organisations], learning has no explicit connection to strategic objectives.

4. The post-COVID workplace

The final challenge to best practice implementation, for the purposes of this paper, is the reality of our new post-COVID workplace. Many organisations are offering more flexible policies which allow for hybrid work between home and office. Some have disposed of offices all together and their workforce is entirely remote.

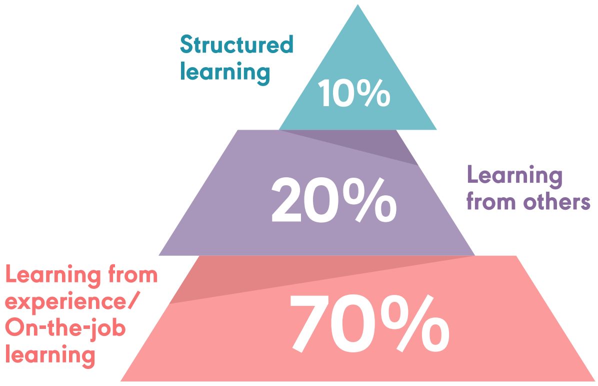
A study in September 2022 showed that in the two weeks prior, Australians worked for an average of 8.09 days, 2.13 of which were work from home days[13]. While this shift is affording workers greater work/life balance, there are downsides. Particularly with employees coming into the office on different days, people are not meeting up in a work environment as often as they used to. The ability to walk over to the next desk and ask a colleague for advice, or even have quick, informal chats in the kitchen, has significantly dwindled.

This means many organisations are struggling to build effective communities of practice, while the scarcity of high-quality meetups has increased siloes and opportunities for one part of the organisation to run projects differently from other areas. Plus, it's hard to build support networks if you only meet up virtually every now and then.

INSIGHTS ON IMPROVING RETENTION AND SKILLS

Of course, competencies, personalities and experiences all vary, and with employees moving around in their careers, aligning people and capabilities into a uniform approach is already tricky. The challenges outlined above only make this job harder.

Fortunately, there are ways to overcome these hurdles and avoid common traps. When working to embed learning and drive consistency, we recommend giving serious consideration to the following areas.



Active learning is the stickiest method of learning at work.

SOURCE: The Growth Faculty

Learning from others: the power of teamwork

Firstly, let's refer back to the 10/20/70 model of learning we touched on earlier. In our view, it's this middle 20 per cent section of the pyramid where organisations can make the most gains.

While coaching is a critical part of this segment, this doesn't mean 'learning led by coaches' or coaching delivered purely on a one-on-one basis. To effectively retain and embed learning and drive best practice implementation, this middle tier should focus on 'learning from others', plural. This means tapping into the power of teamwork by placing emphasis on:

Peer-to-peer learning
Team members collaborate and work together to reach a goal or improve a skill. This harnesses their collective knowledge and experience, and they learn from each other through teamwork. 'Peer-to-peer' learning has been found to improve metacognition, clarity of understanding and confidence in the task[14]. What's more, in a study of how employees prefer to learn, 64 per cent[15] opted for this method.

Coaches as enablers
As well as being domain experts skilled in the relevant methods and frameworks, coaches should be guiding teams to work out where and how they can improve, enabling them to grow and find their own way[16]. The aim is to nudge them to align to best practice, rather than leading or simply imparting their own knowledge and skills.

Active learning
One of the reasons peer-to-peer learning is so effective is because it draws on the concept of active learning – the 'stickiest' method of learning at work. When employees guide one another, brainstorm, and give feedback, they draw more connections between what they're learning and solving workplace problems. This increases interest and motivation, helps to retain the learning and also builds valuable networks[17].

Forgoing self-assessments

As we've mentioned, measurement is key to the success of embedding and performance improvement activities. Done well it enables organisations to focus on those capabilities most in need of attention and track progress over time. Reliance on self-assessments, however, is fraught with difficulties.

As such, we recommend organisations start by pitching assessments at the team level rather than at individuals. In other words, asking: What is the team doing well? What is it not doing so well?

When you shift the focus away from individual performance data you also remove distrust in the process and personal bias. This clears the way for much more honest, accurate information.

Measuring behaviour over knowledge

Ultimately, any investment in skills and improvement through alignment to best practice should result in improved delivery results. Over-runs should go down. Estimates should become more accurate. Deadlines should be met. Risks should be managed better.

However, given the size and complexity of some portfolios, these are often 'lag' indicators that are not seen for many months or even years. (In the agile world, this should be sooner, however.)

The goal is to see the day-to-day behaviours of your people aligned to best practice and consistent across the organisation. So, this means that the 'lead' indicator to improved results is the behaviours of the teams. This also demonstrates we should be assessing behaviours, not skills. This can also lead to a richer style of assessment where we can measure:

» 'technical' behaviours, such as estimation or risk management; and
» 'non-technical' behaviours, such as communication and negotiation.

These non-technical areas can be just as significant in the performance of teams.

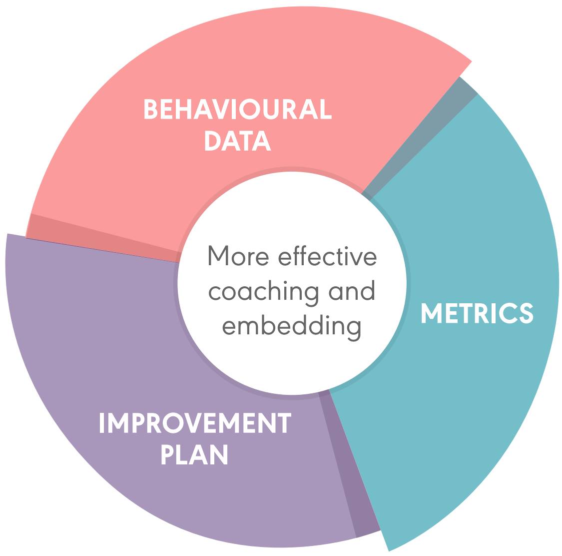
The 'lead' indicator to improved results is the behaviours of the teams.

Creating a documented plan

Coaching is often overly reliant on gut feel and guess work without the data to back it up. But, with the right information and approach, you can align your efforts to hard metrics and create an improvement plan. This ensures everyone is pulling together in the same direction and, with subsequent assessments, you can measure performance against specific goals.

Combined with peer-to-peer learning, teams are actively involved in designing and documenting areas for improvement, which promotes engagement and ownership and makes the learning and embedding more effective.

Essentially, you're empowering the coaching process and ensuring coaches and teams are focused on targeting those capabilities that will have the most impact. This helps to drive improvements in the application of best practice and enables organisations to get more from their L&D investments.



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Capability Improvement Workshops

In our work advising and training clients to deliver to global best practice, we've had plenty of opportunity to put these learning techniques and approaches to the test. Since 2020, we've applied them to a set of tools, methods and pilot programmes, which we've now honed into a simple, but effective solution to embedding learning.

Approach summary

Driven by highly interactive four-hour Capability Improvement Workshops, this approach is best delivered in-person to teams of up to 20 people. This could be a team working across any domain, such as project management or business analysis, or an entire project team.

Guided by one of our expert facilitators, the aim is to bring people together, gather performance data at the team level and actively engage participants to identify areas of weakness and develop their own measurable improvement plan. To maximise outcomes, the half-day sessions are designed to be:

» **Simple** – this means organisations can scale and repeat across the organisation without relying on highly skilled coaches with scarce skills.

» **Short and sharp** – so you can take teams out of their day jobs with minimal input for a fast return and measurable improvement.

» **Driven by data** – teams get access to our intuitive Capability Hub and pre-set assessments, which enable them to assess how well they're putting best practice learning into practical use.

» **Action-oriented** – through active learning, teams collaborate and commit to small, incremental improvements, with owners, success measures and dates.

» **Flexible** – sessions work for agile, project management, change management, or just about any skill or capability you wish to improve.

Ideally, Capability Improvement Workshops are run as part of a targeted capability uplift program but the approach is very effective for any team on completion of training to embed and accelerate learning, or mid-way through a project as a checkpoint. The one prerequisite is that there is foundational knowledge of the domain being assessed and frameworks for reference in place.

The areas we focus on reflect our core areas of training and consulting expertise and all sessions and assessments are aligned to global best practice as per the table below:

Alignment with best practice

AREA	ALIGNMENT
Project Management	PMBOK
Business Analysis	BABOK
Change Management	CMBOK
Agile	Agile Manifesto Principles
Scaled Agile (SAFe)	Scaled Agile (SAFe)
IT Service Management	ITIL

Capturing the right data

Before we get into the details of the workshop, it's important to understand our data capture process as this underpins the approach.

Within the PM-Partners Capability Hub we've designed a set of comprehensive, off-the-shelf behavioural assessments covering both the discipline or domain, such as project management, and the critical best practice dimensions related to each area, e.g. cost management.

As mentioned earlier, the 'lead' indicator to improved results is the behaviours of the teams. Each assessment is designed to score how people are aligning to required behaviours depending on the accredited learning and best practice your organisation is trying to implement and maintain. This provides organisations with qualitative and quantitative data on your current maturity and capabilities and allows teams to develop and embed skills against professional certifications and proven methods and frameworks. As we'll explain, teams are then reassessed at follow-up workshops so both stakeholders and team members can accurately monitor and track progress.

In addition, we can develop slightly customised assessments for organisations to align to their bespoke frameworks and tools. We've done this for several customers, for example, specialist safety alignment in the construction industry, and areas such as DevSecOps in financial services to align to the way that their development team needs to work.

Capability Improvement Workshop format

The workshop is broken down into the following steps:

1. Introduction and capability assessment
2. Review data and identify areas for improvement
3. Team breakouts and ideation
4. Review and finalise improvement plan
5. Rinse and repeat.

Step 1: Introduction and capability assessment

Prior to the workshop, we typically meet with the team leader to get the background on the organisation, the team, methods used, and determine the area to be assessed.

At the start of the session, the coach/facilitator explains the structure of the day, the data capture process, and the fact that the data is for team, not individual, use. This lets the team know they can provide honest feedback, even if it's brutally honest.

As mentioned above, it's critical that these assessments score how teams are aligning to a behaviour. For example, if we take the domain of project management, then one of the best practice dimensions might be cost management, and example behaviours could be:

» Cost control is being applied to all projects and project teams are held to account for their budgets

» There is a centrally held register of project cost forecasts that is regularly updated and used to inform portfolio prioritisation, balancing, planning and funding.

The team are then responding on a scale such as True through to False, typically a 0-5 score. While our Capability Hub enables granular data analytics, for the purposes of this workshop, it's best to start by looking at five to six best practice dimensions (i.e. areas such as cost management) with around two to three behavioural statements per dimension. This gives around 20-25 data points for the session.

Step 2: Review data and identify areas for improvement

The next step is to review and analyse the data and identify a shortlist of one or two dimensions to improve. For example, the PM-Partners best practice dimensions for change management include scoping change, change communication and assessing change impacts.

When analysing the data, there are a couple of things to remember:

1. The Dunning-Kruger effect – the first assessment may be a little high, so expect the second assessment to be worse, not better.

2. The data should be relative from workshop to workshop – often making comparisons to other teams and workshops may not work, especially if there is a significant difference in seniority of teams.

The big things to look for are:

» Dimensions of high or low performance
» Dimensions with a large difference between highest and lowest score across the team.

In the change management example below, there are lots of areas where the high/low score is the widest possible spread, which is typical for an initial assessment. This is great, as it allows the facilitator to ask the team for examples of both good and bad and explain why they scored themselves so high or low.

Based on these conversations, the team will then select their shortlist of dimensions to work on in the breakout sessions. It's best to focus on dimensions where there seems to be overall agreement that improvement is needed, and where the examples provided highlight relatively simple steps to improve.

This is where the experience and knowledge of the facilitator comes in, and importantly, an understanding of the best practice and frameworks your organisation uses.

Step 3: Team breakouts and ideation

It's at this stage where collaboration and active learning really comes into play to uplift and embed best practice behaviours and drive results. The facilitator breaks the teams out into smaller groups to brainstorm with their peers and draft improvement plans for the dimensions selected e.g. benefits alignment and realisation.

Each team can use the detailed data at the behaviour level to assist with the breakout sessions, for example, if there were two to three behaviours, this might look like:

DIMENSION : Benefit Alignment and Realisation

#	Question	Rating	Score	Score %	Score (Min)	Score (Max)
570	Establish measures and measurement mechanisms to evaluate performance of change activity against desired outcomes.	●	2.67	53.33%	2.00	3.00
580	Evaluate the effectiveness of the tactics/interventions using planned measures.	●	2.33	46.67%	1.00	3.00
610	Link change outcomes to desired business benefits (e.g. revenue, efficiency, etc.).	●	2.33	46.67%	1.00	3.00

This is important, as beneath the summarised data, they may be doing some things well and some things need improvement.

Each team is asked to come up with one to two improvement plan items, which need to include:

1. The area they want to improve e.g. mapping change activities to business benefits.
2. The actions they will take, aligned to the SMART methodology to ensure they're specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely e.g. review change management framework and ensure benefits are linked to change, communicate updates to project managers and change leads, perform training and updates.
3. The success criteria that will be used to measure this improvement e.g. updated frameworks, trained people, review of benefits mapping to change in active projects.
4. A date and owner for the activities, so there is accountability.

The teams do this for each area they're looking to improve, ideally in one or two time-boxed sessions of around 30 minutes. This helps to keep the improvements short and sharp.

The role of the facilitator here is to keep the teams focused on improvements that could be achieved, as well as being the domain expert to guide them to best practice.

Step 4: Review and finalise improvement plan

The final step is to come back together as a team and share the results of the group work. Each breakout team walks through their improvement plan items and answers any questions.

The purpose is to draw further on the collective knowledge of the group, get some feedback and refine as necessary. Often there are too many improvement plan items and actions – the aim is to cull these and start with only the best three to four. The facilitator will help to sanity check the plans and ensure they are realistic and aligned to your organisation's needs.

Once there's agreement on the plan, this is documented, with owners and dates, and shared with the team, either as a link, Excel spreadsheet or PDF.

Post-workshop, we provide the team leader with a detailed report on the team's capabilities across dimensions and categories and the documented improvement plan. We also arrange a one-on-one feedback session with the workshop facilitator to address any questions.

Step 5: Rinse and repeat

The workshops are designed to focus on small improvements that can be achieved quickly – after all, it's significantly better to succeed at a small step than fail at a big one. This way they can be repeated every six to 12 weeks, depending on the level and type of uplift plan your organisation is following.

Ideally you keep the same group together, so they work as a team to drive the improvements and uplift both their delivery performance and environment. At each workshop, they re-assess how they're going, identify where improvements are being made and what still needs working on. Then they can adjust and refine the improvement plan.

In this way, teams are engaged in highly effective 'learning loops' – a term coined by author Morten Hansen in his book *Great at Work*. Based on a study of 5,000 managers and employees, he identified this process where workers 'measure, feedback, modify, do/re-do and repeat', as one of seven practices shown to correlate with exceptional results[18].

Ref. Code	Item	Target End Date	End Date	1st Assessment Score	2nd Assessment Score	%		Target Score	vs Target		Owner	Improvement Area	Status		Priority
I001	Improve Change Scheduling	3 months ago		2.00	3.56	78.00%		3.00	18.67%		Ian	Dimension : Change Stream Governance	Completed		High
I002	Improve Change Governance	3 months ago		2.00	3.56	78.00%		3.00	18.67%		Kamlesh	Dimension : Change Stream Governance	In-Progress		Medium
I003	Link Change to Business Benefit	3 months ago		2.44	2.56	4.92%		3.00	-14.67%		Jane	Dimension : Benefit Alignment and Realisation	Not Started		Medium
I004	Improve Internal COE Comms	3 weeks ago		3.08	3.00	-2.60%		3.20	-6.25%		Jourdan	Dimension : Change Communications	Not Started		Medium

Often, if you pick one or two improvement areas you can run the workshops in a short series of three to six workshops to just focus on these items. This is particularly useful in a large organisation where different teams work on different areas.

Over time, as you build up people's confidence, you can carefully introduce self-assessments and 360° assessments, incorporating two-way feedback between employees, line managers and stakeholders to get a more complete picture. These are all set up and accessible in the Capability Hub. Clear comms to guide participants through this process and explain how the data is being used helps to ensure they stay on board.

WORKSHOP BENEFITS AND RESULTS

As we're seen with our customers, these workshops drive a number of highly tangible and hidden benefits for both the teams and the organisation more broadly:

Visible benefits

Lead indicator driven

The use of behavioural assessments provides your organisation with 'lead' indicator data. As discussed earlier, driving the right behaviours is a precursor to better performance and alignment to best practice. Your organisation can then track data and tangible improvements from session to session.

Teamwork and self-improvement

By working together proactively with their peers to identify strengths and weaknesses, teams have a better understanding of how they're performing and what good and bad looks like in their organisation. As they workshop solutions, and action these steps, they draw on collective knowledge and put learning into practice. As research has shown, discussing, sharing or even teaching others drives learning that sticks.

Documented improvement plan

A key output from your first workshop is a documented improvement plan with clear steps and success criteria, which the team owns and actions. They can refine and iterate the plan at every subsequent workshop to accelerate the improvement. In our experience, focusing on small improvements versus large ambition is the best way. A plan with measurable outcomes also provides transparency to stakeholders, so they can see progress on their L&D investment.

Hidden benefits

Internal support network

Through collaboration and peer learning, the workshops provide an opportunity for practitioners to strengthen their internal networks and access domain support going forward. In a post-COVID world where many of us work remotely, this is invaluable – particularly when research shows that connected teams positively impact both profitability and retention[19]. In our experience, networking also helps to build informal communities of practice, while picking teams from across the organisation, or teams of varying seniority, drives learning at an enterprise level.

Maximising facilitator (coach) value

The role of the facilitator in these workshops is to get the workshop attendees to do most of the detailed work. The teams proactively learn with (and from) their peers by discussing, sharing and problem solving, while the coach listens and guides them to align to best practice. This approach frees up the coach to focus on consistency and driving improvements that will deliver returns, instead of being bogged down in the nitty gritty.

Cross department learning

Running workshops with teams from different departments and divisions can help drive both standards and learning across the organisation, as well as nurturing communities of practice. In one customer example, these workshops highlighted an organisational challenge that each division thought was unique to their own area – driving enterprise improvement.

VISIBLE BENEFITS

- **Lead indicator data** on behaviours drives best practice performance
- **Teamwork** promotes engagement and practical learning that sticks
- **Documented improvement plan** delivers measurable outcomes

HIDDEN BENEFITS

- **Networking** builds support and informal communities of practice
- **Expert facilitator** promotes consistency and best practice alignment
- **Cross-department learning** delivers organisation-wide improvement

Customer success

State government organisation – Agile ways of working

A division of this state government agency made the business decision to move to Agile ways of working. Despite two attempts, which included training and coaching, they failed to implement Agile practices with any degree of success.

PM-Partners were selected to lead the transition based on previous work with the organisation and our track record with dozens of similar engagements.

From the outset, our team took a holistic approach of core skills training followed by a series of Capability Improvement Workshops and hands-on coaching. The core training baselined everyone's understanding and know-how, and our expert facilitator set about working with the teams to identify where and why they were struggling to put learnings into practice.

This entailed bringing the teams together and analysing and applying the assessment data within the Capability Improvement Workshops. It was only through this forum that the teams could air the challenges and frustrations they were experiencing and plot a path forward.

PM-Partners coaches then worked hand-in-glove with the teams to help embed the new Agile ways of working.

At the end of each workshop, improvement plans were refined and, combined with assessment data, we could show and measure progress. The organisation was then able to roll the approach out across other teams.

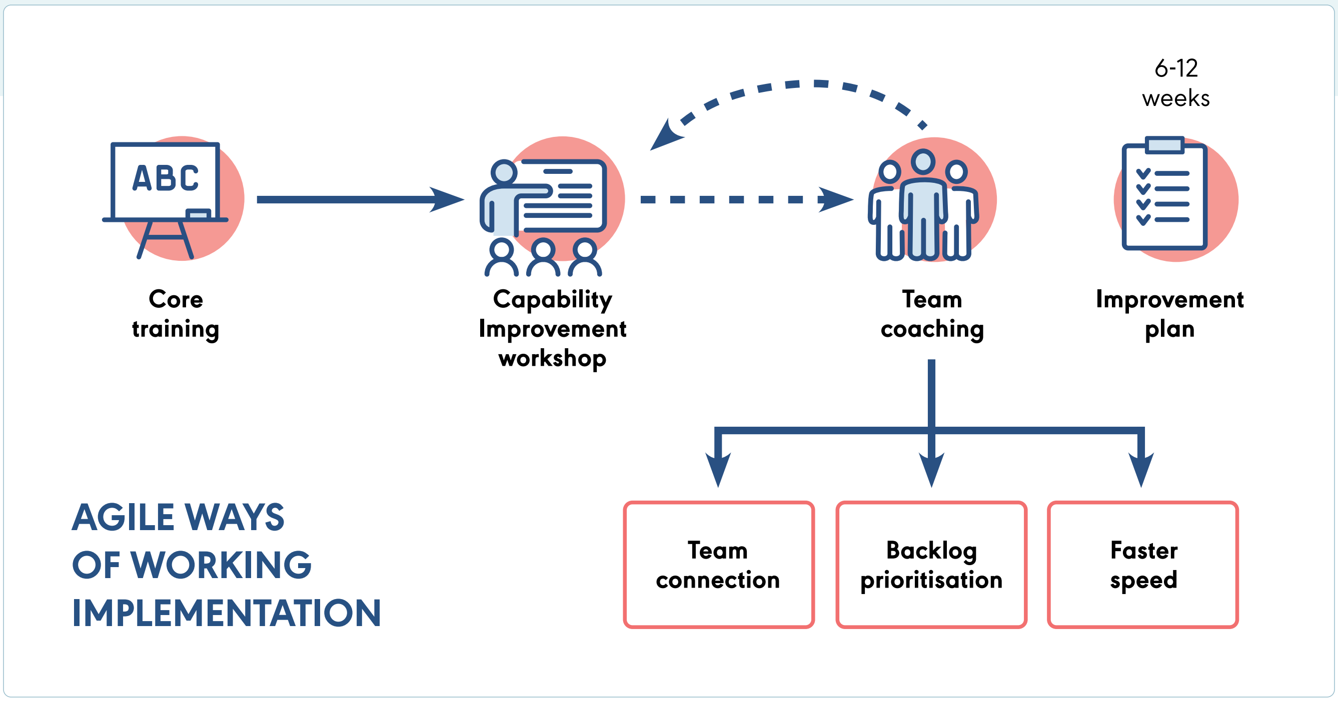
The net result was a complete transition to Agile, resulting in greater team connection and collaboration, prioritisation of the organisation's backlog and faster speed to market.

This was demonstrated with the Agile metrics:

95%
39%
Commitment delivered increased from 39% to 95%

31 days
7 days
Cycle time reduced from 31 days to 7 days: a 70% reduction

95%
39%
Definition of done increased from 39% to 95%



Customer success

Global software vendor – project delivery

This well-known Australian global software vendor's consulting business had grown rapidly. The success of their SaaS products had seen them move outside their traditional customer base and into larger organisations. This meant more complex and larger implementation projects and a greater need for delivery consistency.

The client engaged PM-Partners due to our expertise helping customers achieve excellence in outcome delivery through the application of best practice methods and frameworks. Their goal was to drive a methodology and approach for their project delivery team. More importantly, with customer projects already running behind, we identified the need to change the behaviours of the team as quickly as possible.

PM-Partners leveraged the Capability Improvement Workshops to assess the team's current skills and capabilities. These highly interactive sessions also got teams to share the good and the bad they were seeing across their customer engagements, both large and small.

We ran a series of project management training classes to baseline and standardise knowledge. A key output from the workshops was a capability improvement plan that the team created and agreed to. Our role was then to help drive the plan through coaching and hands-on help where needed.

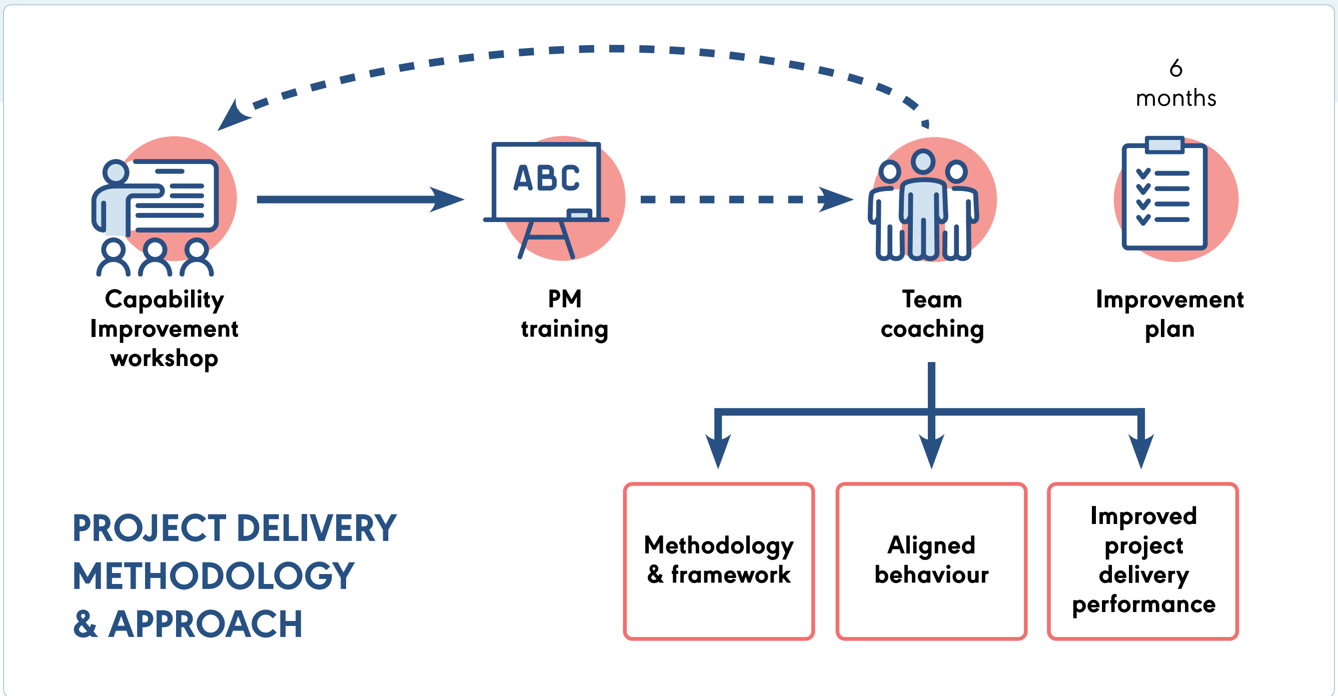
A series of workshops over a six-month period allowed the plan to be tweaked and added to.

As a net result of these activities:

The vendors' customers benefited from having their projects run on time

60% The vendor cut the time they could not bill customers by 60%

$220k Removing inefficiencies equated to a saving of over $220k in the first 6 months



CONCLUSION

Ensuring delivery teams are aligned to your organisation's methods and frameworks is critical to success. Training is the first step to future-proofing skills, but it's how you transform these structured learnings into tangible performance improvements that makes all the difference.

By combining our experience with the power of data and analytics, PM-Partners' Capability Improvement Workshops provide an opportunity to optimise the coaching and embedding process.

Backed by best practice behavioural assessments, sessions are purpose-driven with measurable outcomes aligned to your goals. Pitching these at the team level encourages openness, while proven learning techniques boost engagement and retention - and help to build networks of practice.

Your people not only work together to identify small, meaningful improvements but, with the help of our experts, create their own action plan. This drives their commitment to progress and helps to pinpoint other areas for L&D investment.

Ultimately, it's about turning the battleship gradually. By bringing teams together for short, sharp sessions you can make incremental gains that will make a big difference to your organisation's performance.

For more information on PM-Partners' Capability Improvement Workshops and how they work to embed learning and drive the application of best practice across delivery roles and teams, contact our experts or call 1300 70 13 14 today.

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CONTACT

About PM-Partners

We are strong advocates and practitioners of Agile and Scaled Agile and have a 25-year pedigree in traditional project management, programme management and portfolio execution. We believe our multi-modal approach enables the right blend of best practice frameworks and methods for your organisation

Known to minimise risk, reduce costs and improve services, our team is also skilled at driving measurable, long-term value for our customers.

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