

Seven Deadly Sins – Business Case Management

Continuing our series of blogs entitled **Seven Deadly Sins** that lead to regular and highly predictable failure on range of topics.

Today we are focusing on Business Case Management, an organisational ritual that doesn't seem to stem the tide of failure despite the enormous amounts of time spent preparing them.

1. **Failing to maintain the business case.** Many failures only come to light late on in delivery because most organisations do not track ongoing viability within the project or programme, or evolving changes in the environment.
2. **Thinking that project success is about time/cost/scope** – without including benefits and value, the time/cost/scope trilogy can be misleading for programmes in particular
3. **Forgetting you have to deliver the change**, not just get it past the approval committee. So much effort goes into gaining approval it can come as quite a shock when it has to move from a document into delivery.
4. **Starting with assumptions** on what the solution should be blinds you to the best options. So many projects and programmes go wrong because the solution was decided before the business case work started, therefore the business case becomes the justification for a way of doing it rather than a genuine options appraisal.
5. **Failing to fully engage stakeholders** in how they will be impacted by the business case. Consequently, on the way through the approvals process it is ambushed or once it goes into delivery, unexpected costs begin to emerge.
6. **Hiding the full costs of the initiative** will always lead to trouble. The costs of change are invariably under estimated in a business case in the hope some unwitting party will pick up the bill.
7. **Failing to adequately apply risk rating to the costs or the benefits.** Without risk rating both sides of the justification this increases the risks of failure as organisations are increasingly applying a risk mitigation to the costs, but few are applying a risk factor to benefits. Either side can move up or down.