



More for Less

- responding to the public sector squeeze

You may know how to save 1% or 2%, but do you know how to save 15 or 20% while maintaining quality of services? It's clear that this degree of step-change requires a different approach, and you will need to look at both **efficiency** and **effectiveness** – in the words of Anthony Robbins *"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten"*.

So what are your options?

Lets try to remove some mental clutter by examining your options:

- You could simply cut your downstream budgets - but this risks poorer outcomes
- You could make bold statements, attempting to change attitudes and results by exhortation and decree
- How about traditional 'efficiency savings'? Of course, incremental approaches are likely to get incremental results
- You could bring in consultants who can study your situation, compare with global best practice and recommend changes. Of course you then need to implement those changes, and perhaps the consultants can help you with that part of the process too (perhaps you should be wary if they will not). And this approach does have the advantage of spreading the blame for failure
- If you could identify 15-20% 'waste' you could remove it, perhaps by adopting Lean methods. The literature suggests that some organisations have achieved this, but success is of course dependent on many factors including management commitment, time, culture, and good support. Again, consultants will be only too pleased to help.

Of course, some combination of the above *might* work. But you may already have crossed many off the list.

So what else should you consider?

Perhaps you can harness the collective wisdom of your organisation to challenge long-held assumptions and decide to do things differently, perhaps even stop doing some things altogether. Making sure you are doing the right things, and only then working out how to do them well. In other words, focusing on **effectiveness** before focusing on **efficiency**.

But how do you do that?

The first question is, do you have that collective wisdom inside your organisation? If not, you may need to involve others who see your organisation from different perspectives, for example customers and suppliers. This is also where consultants with specific expertise can add genuine value (not a sales pitch for us, by the way, not yet).

You then need an effective process to enable this group to share their knowledge and experience, to reveal hidden assumptions and to create new insights, to make decisions and to develop a robust and pragmatic implementation plan with momentum behind it.

So here is the sales pitch. Our Synplex process was developed to facilitate groups to tackle complex multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder challenges just like this, with the emphasis on **effectiveness**. We don't necessarily bring any knowledge or deep insight into your specific situation – we help you to assemble that from internal resources, and external resources if necessary. What we provide is a facilitated process, a framework to make it happen, with a way forward that everyone can support.

Peter Miles, 7 Dec 09