i-Realise

Transitioning to business as usual
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Making change stick is a challenge for most organisations and any kind of change project. In this, the second of our expert series, we look at why it's vital to plan for the transition from project to business as usual, to ensure your investment is realised and to keep your employees engaged.

One of the ways that you can increase the likelihood of delivering your targeted benefits, and cause minimal disruption to your people and customers, is to provide some 'hyper-care' during the transition.

The transition is part of the project

This period between 'project' and business as usual (BAU) is a defined project phase with a start, middle and end of its own. Yet, all too often businesses close down the project and remove the subject matter experts (SMEs) as soon as the business channel, new system, re-organisation or process change has gone live. By doing this they lengthen the time it takes to achieve benefits, and employees are left to fix issues without the support they need to solve them. This means stakeholders see your project in a negative light and the change isn't fully adopted.

It's not just about training

Sometimes people think that the final project phase is user training, but in our experience it's so much more than that. At i-Realise we believe that Hypercare needs 3 things: planning, resource and entry/exit criteria.

- **Planning**. Your planning should consider how you set up problem reporting and monitoring, problem triage and escalation and tactical response to problems vs. longer term fixes to problems. Do you need extended support hours and more communication? What are your KPIs for exit, how do you reduce support commensurate with demand, and what does the gradual exit of the project team look like? We work on a Hypercare plan with all of our client projects and have established proven checklists and templates.

- **Resource**. Projects often have external parties (subject matter experts, contractors, consultancies) who will not be available in the organisation on an on-going basis. Target them to transition their skills and knowledge to support teams (IT, training, operations, HR etc). Try to use as many of your permanent team as you can for testing phases prior to Hypercare, as this allows them to build up useful knowledge of their own. Don't pull all of your SMEs out at once – phase their exit.

- **Entry and Exit criteria**. Hypercare usually starts when user acceptance testing (UAT) is completed and a 'live' date is agreed. But it could also be the point at which the first orders come in and the lifecycle of real interactions begins. Exit criteria for when the Hypercare phase ends may be about stability or confidence (% errors or queries below a certain level) or when the volume of successful transactions reaches a certain level (% orders now happening through a new channel or process). Our advice is to define these types of KPIs, not just set a date for the phase to end.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Communication is a key element of Hypercare – it's important to monitor that all communication has actually landed with the right people and been understood. This can be done using 'pulse checks' - quizzes to test knowledge in a fun way, as well as monitoring systems such as Onsophic that our people are trained to use.

This is the stage of the project that will optimise the opportunity to get the planned benefits from the change, and for the people impacted by the change to experience it in as seamless a way as possible. These people could be employees, customers or partners – or all of the above.

As part of the transformation to BAU it is essential to evaluate that the transformation has landed as expected, and that the people it impacts are aligned to the change. Without this element in the BAU process people could derail the change.

The risks of closing your project down too soon

This transition is often the phase of the project that is cut back - in both budget and time terms, because it's at the end of the overall lifecycle. But just like breaking a bone, the post-operative care and effort in the first few weeks makes a big difference to the overall outcome of the surgery.

Hypercare protects the health of your project, your people and your business. And if you've already spent thousands or even millions on your transformation project, cutting back Hypercare at the end is a false economy that you may come to regret.

Making change happen, together

Delivering change and transformation success through people, process and technology.

Call us now on **+44 (0)20 3008 6358** or email **info@i-realise.co.uk** to find out more about how we can support all elements of your transformation programme.

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