

From Possibility...

BAA, the world's biggest airport operator, will spend more than £3 billion upgrading Heathrow over the next ten years. The spend at London's three airports will be over £6.8 billion. On average, they will invest £2 million each day on new airport facilities to support better, more efficient and more enjoyable travelling for millions of people.

Because its airports are open 24 hours a day, managing the construction programme is an immensely complex task. The company constantly challenges its construction suppliers to employ best practices and to raise their standards.

Part of that challenge is the implementation of Earned Value Management techniques, known as "Project Controls" at BAA.

At Heathrow Airport, a team of Project Controls specialists provides technical and facilitation support to project teams and contractors.

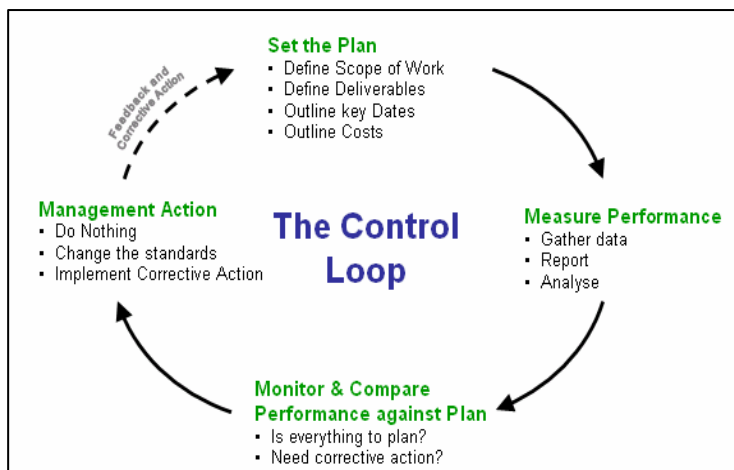
One of the key resources they wanted to develop was a Practitioner's Learning Solution: a toolkit that could be used to help project teams learn how to apply "Project Controls".

Our Approach

Ian Seath, Director of Ad Esse, has been working with Sarah Taylor (from BAA AMA Learning & Development), to design and develop the Practitioner Solution and to coach the Project Controls Facilitator team in how to use it to support their project teams.

The key elements of support were:

- An analysis of needs
- Development of the Learning Solution
- Coaching of the Project Controls Facilitators



[The Project Controls cycle above is © BAA]

The analysis of needs was based around the basic Project Controls cycle (left) and included a series of focus group discussions with a cross-section of project managers and commercial managers.

These discussions were used to identify and prioritise the topic areas that would need to be included in the Learning Solution. They also helped to identify some of the cultural factors that would influence successful adoption of the solution.

A key decision in planning the approach was that the Project Controls Facilitators should be closely involved in the development of the Learning Solution. After all, they were the technical experts and would be the prime users of any resources developed.

It was also decided that, wherever possible, Powerpoint presentations would be avoided. Sarah Taylor was keen that the solution should provide a mixture of learning methods and media, and avoid the traditional "death by Powerpoint" presentation approach.

To Actuality...

The Learning Solution

Each of the Facilitators took an area of the learning needs and, with support from Ian Seath, put together the elements that they felt would be required to deliver a practical solution. They developed standard format Session Plans that any of their team could use to plan and deliver each of the elements. These provide timings, guidance on key points to make and references to supporting resources.

The resources include exercises and case studies as well as core materials that can be used as posters or handouts. All the material is in a consistent format, in a shared directory where all the Facilitators can access them. Eventually, they will be made available on the Project Controls intranet site.

A key point about the design of the Practitioner Learning Solution is that it is modular; the elements can be mixed and matched for use as needed. One of the other tools developed to help with selecting the appropriate elements is a series of Technical Needs Analysis checklists. These are a set of questions that can be used, either formally or informally, to find out the starting point knowledge of project teams. The results can be used to ensure only the relevant parts of the Learning Solution are used to help meet clearly identified needs.

Facilitator's Guide	
	<p>Alongside the core technical subject elements of the Learning Solution, we developed a Facilitator's Guide which provides a step-by-step overview of how to use the resources. The Guide covers how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - carry out a Needs Analysis - select relevant resources - plan and facilitate learning events - evaluate the effectiveness of the learning

The final part of our support for the Practitioner Learning Solution was the design and delivery of four practical workshops which took the Facilitators through the approach they would need to adopt with their project team clients. It also gave them an opportunity to tailor some of the materials and practice their delivery skills.

The Benefits

There is now a comprehensive set of resources available to the Facilitators to support project teams. It is in a consistent format and stored in a logical structure in their shared drive. It provides a common baseline of learning materials to enable the successful adoption of Earned Value Management in BAA's portfolio of construction projects.

The Facilitators' view is that the material is ready to use and, where it is of a more generic nature, has applicability to the "Lite" and "Local" Project Controls solutions which are being used on smaller construction projects.

These resources should not be "static". They are subject to change and improvement as the Project Controls Solution itself evolves. As such, they need to be owned and managed. New resources will be added, particularly in support of the "Lite" and "Local" Solutions as these are rolled out.