



# Assessing your Steering Group

Assess how well your steering group is performing against our best-practice model



**Well-governed and well-executed, a Steering Group is an incredibly valuable part of any change programme.**

A Steering Group is designed to drive your change programme forward. It must remove blockers, resolve issues and mitigate risks, keeping the programme under control and on track. With this achieved, the programme is more likely to stay true to its original vision, delivering and embedding sustainable change as cost effectively and efficiently as possible.

**We asked a number of Programme Managers and Sponsors how they get the best from their Steering Groups. Their top suggestions were:**

1. Always outline clearly the **decisions** that must be made
2. Make sure the **right people** can attend - give them plenty of notice and make it clear their attendance is vital
3. Provide the **data** required to enable the **decisions** to be made, including **options** and a **rationale** for the recommended decision
4. Prepare **early**, briefing those whose support you need ahead of the meeting
5. If any attendee doesn't know the answer to a question – **they must say so**
6. Be **polite** and **professional** at all times
7. Don't **hide** things. Make it clear a deadline is going to be missed – and explain why
8. Use **clear** and **simple** language
9. Check for **understanding**, especially around the key decisions
10. **Summarise** all of the decisions made at the end of each meeting

**Common misunderstandings that stand in the way of making progress:**

- **A Steering Group is a communications forum:** No it isn't. Its purpose is to make decisions that help to move the programme forward
- **Steering Groups are monthly and last 2 hours:** They might be, but let the needs of the programme dictate the schedule
- **The more attendees the better:** Never! Go for the minimum attendees you need to make the decisions on the agenda
- **The more slides the better:** No- they won't be read. Only present the information that is needed, and present it clearly
- **The Programme Manager should be challenged hard:** This may sometimes be the case, but support is also needed – this is collaboration, not a trial



## How well is your own Steering Group operating?



Disagree



Neutral



Agree

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree |
|--|----------|---------|-------|
| The Steering Group is clearly focused on helping the programme achieve agreed outcomes     |          |         |       |
| The Steering Group quickly makes available the resources that the programme needs          |          |         |       |
| The Steering Group sets a very clear and consistent direction for the programme            |          |         |       |
| The Steering Group makes the clear and timely decisions that are needed by the programme   |          |         |       |
| The Sponsor and Programme Manager always attend Steering Group meetings                    |          |         |       |
| Partner and supplier representatives attend appropriate Steering Group meetings            |          |         |       |
| Functional business leaders (IT, Finance, Sales etc.) attend all Steering Group meetings   |          |         |       |
| All Steering Group meetings are well-prepared, with material distributed in advance        |          |         |       |
| Briefings and presentations at Steering Group are clear and concise                        |          |         |       |
| All issues are presented with clear options, implications and recommendations              |          |         |       |
| Key stakeholders are briefed in advance when necessary, to avoid surprises                 |          |         |       |
| Attendees arrive on time, remain focused during the meeting and don't leave until the end  |          |         |       |
| Discussions at Steering Group are professional, constructive and collaborative             |          |         |       |
| Steering Group meetings seek to quickly resolve issues that are impeding progress          |          |         |       |
| Steering Group meetings seek to understand why issues occur, not apportion blame           |          |         |       |
| Time is taken at Steering Group meetings to acknowledge and celebrate success              |          |         |       |
| Steering Group meetings are effectively chaired, ensuring all appropriate voices are heard |          |         |       |
| Individual stakeholder all agree their needs are met at Steering Group meetings            |          |         |       |
| Steering Group meetings run to time and stick to the agenda                                |          |         |       |
| Steering Group meetings do not get bogged down by difficult topics or attendees            |          |         |       |



We hope you found this article useful. If you would like to talk with us about it, or any other aspect of your change challenges, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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[\*\*https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12734312/\*\*](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12734312/)

