

Improving operational efficiency at WSP through Business Analysis.



Upon WSP Global's acquisition of the locally owned company Opus in 2017, the need arose to integrate their onboarding procedures with those of the parent company. WSP New Zealand (formerly Opus) collaborated with Assurity Consulting for two initiatives: Process Optimisation Training and enhancing the onboarding processes. This effort has led to WSP New Zealand now benefiting from a streamlined and lower-risk approach that significantly impacts its capacity to efficiently onboard new clients.

Results ✨

Simplified, accelerated and de-risked WSP's client onboarding processes.

Customer satisfaction
Net Promotor Score (NPS)
increased by 15 points
over the past year.

Created a decision tree model
to help WSP teams apply the
correct Project Management
DLAs to projects.

About

Organisation

WSP New Zealand

Industry

Engineering Professional Services

Solution

Business Analysis

WSP New Zealand is one of the world's leading engineering and professional services firms. The New Zealand operation has 40 offices across the country and offers professional consultancy services, covering property and buildings, environment, power and water, transport, health and safety, architecture, sustainability and climate change, and research.



Challenge

Following its acquisition, WSP New Zealand performed an engagement survey which found that while it had world-class systems, the march of time meant some were outdated and in need of attention. As a company constantly seeking improvement, it set out on a transformation agenda called ReimagineNZ.

“As part of this agenda, Assurity Consulting came in and trained a cohort of our people on change management as part of a Process Optimisation Training exercise,” says John Leatherbarrow, Manager – Commercial at WSP Global. “One of the initiatives where change was necessary was in delegations.”

The issue, explains Leatherbarrow, is that Project Management delegations, known as DLAs (Delegation Level Authority), are complex and can be difficult for WSP staff to navigate easily. Having personally worked with DLAs daily, he describes them as ‘near impenetrable’.

“This is a major issue because the DLAs sit at the front end of project engagement and relate directly to risk management. The DLA effectively determines who in the organisation should be approached for advice, insight and approval before a contract is entered into. If the DLA isn’t followed accurately at the outset, it can imperil entire projects and even put our organisation at risk.”

Beset with what Leatherbarrow describes as ‘a lot of contractual small print’, he adds, “They don’t invite you to look in. That means they might not be referenced when necessary, or they might be misinterpreted. In turn, that means our consultants might not be getting delegations from the right level, and so might miss commercial risks by failing to engage appropriately experienced people.”

A further factor is that executing DLAs isn’t considered a particularly exciting or rewarding component of tendering for a project; any improvement, particularly if it automated or accelerated any part of the process, would be highly desirable – alleviating a cumbersome task.



Solution

To simplify and accelerate the process, WSP requested the support of Assurity to analyse the current DLA policy documentation and, in collaboration with key stakeholders, create a decision tree model to enable WSP staff to better understand and apply the correct Project Management DLAs to their projects.

Ben Holland, GM of Transformation, Commercial and Major Project Governance at WSP New Zealand, explains that the organisation had an idea of what that might look like. “We’d conceptualised a solution but hadn’t put it into practice.”

“After the success of the Process Optimisation Training, we got back Assurity in, put forward our idea, and said ‘over to you’.”



- **Ben Holland**
GM, Transformation,
Commercial and
Major Project Governance,
WSP New Zealand

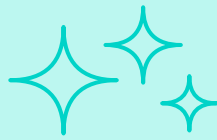
That idea was to automate the process as far as possible by using online tools, which would rapidly guide the company's consultants in the right direction. "We wanted an automated process where the consultant would need to respond to the least number of questions possible, which would drive them to an answer," Holland adds.

To this end, WSP handed its DLAs to Assurity for analysis. Delivery took place over six weeks using Agile and Lean delivery methods, commencing with a discovery and analysis process. The second phase saw initial and then further development of the Decision Tree, including project DLA model analysis with design sessions alongside WSP stakeholders; demonstrations provided ample opportunity for feedback and advancement of the Decision Tree. By the final week, the model was completed and delivered with supporting documentation.

Holland says the initial Process Optimisation training engagement proved an ideal introduction to Assurity's methods and approach. "This brought a lot of thinking processes to light and established the right mindset for looking at our delegations. After all, the delegations are about logic; Assurity hasn't changed the delegations, but has guided the thinking around them to get our organisation away from waste."

It was, he stresses, a complex engagement. “The flexibility and rational approach taken has stood out in the delivery,” Holland adds.

Results



The work delivered by Assurity has substantially simplified how WSP consultants engage with the previously 'impenetrable' DLAs. A consultant now asks four or five questions, which activates the Decision Tree, delivering a name or position from which the consultant should seek further input or approval.

The benefit, however, goes far beyond speed and alleviation of a cumbersome task. "Commercial delegations are there for good reasons as they help manage risk for both parties when we commence a bidding process or enter into a new contract," Leatherbarrow points out. "Poor decisions at the bidding phase affect the entire project; getting the DLAs right is foundational. Getting them right fast is highly advantageous."

An immediate benefit of the work done by Assurity is having greater clarity on how WSP can fully automate the DLA.



"We now know the minimum number of questions needed to help our team navigate complex documents. That supports our long-term view to improve the robustness of bids and delivery outcomes to clients, and help our people improve relationships with them."



— **John Leatherbarrow**
Manager – Commercial,
WSP Global

Holland adds that since engaging with Assurity and through its own sustained effort focusing on all aspects of delivery, WSP New Zealand has seen improvements in how it runs projects. "The outcomes of paying attention to client centricity, behaviours, systems and tools are legion. They include financial benefits and productivity improvements with WSP now in the top quarter of consulting companies," he says.

Holland and Leatherbarrow assert these results are the fruit of a focus on front-end due diligence with the right people involved, and Assurity has played an important part in that.

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