Barriers to innovation…
and how we overcome them

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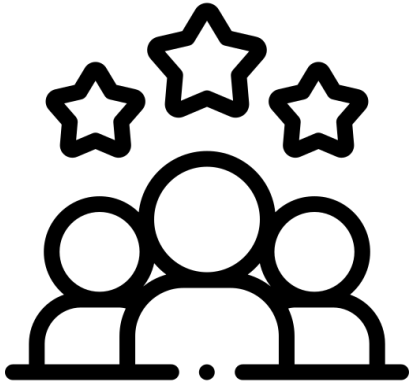
Why this topic?

- In the beginning….
- Why do some projects work?
- Why do some projects not work?
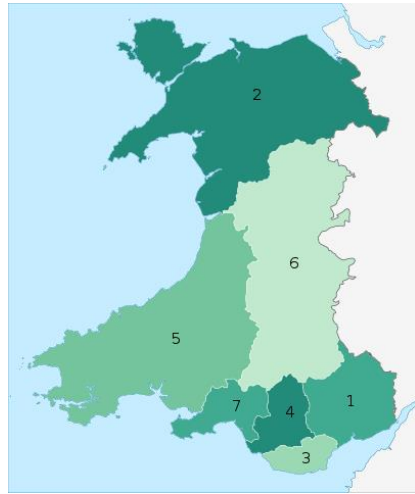- Are there any common themes?
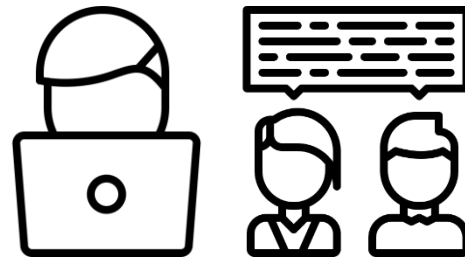
Method

22 Projects
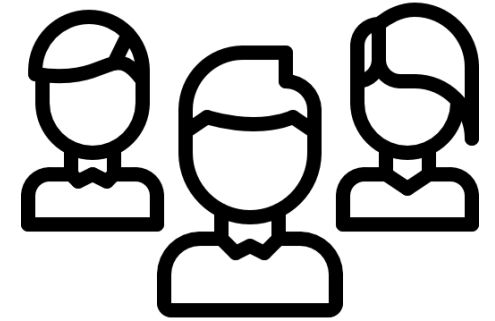

Leading the Innovation or involved in it

Range of Organisations

Email Discussion
Short Interview
Previous Conversations

Range of Project Sizes

Across the Finance Community

What was I trying to find out?

- What barriers did you face?

- Were they overcome? If so, how?

- Successes / Limitations / Failures?

- Lessons or general insights?

- Sustainable?

Common Barriers and Problems

- Finance Community Buy-In

- Interest / Involvement of Stakeholders

- IT

- Time

- Why did they exist?

- Were they overcome?

- Why were they insurmountable?

Finance Community Buy-In

This issue can work in **all directions**

Example: someone trying to amend a process, which other people do not want to change

Risk aversion

"Some Finance colleagues were so concerned about the **potential risks** of the change, which were very **small and easily mitigated**, that they could not see the potential benefits to the team, and to the service"

Finance Community Buy-In

Happy with the way things are

"It is very difficult to persuade someone to help you to redesign their process, if **they want to keep things as they are**"

Finance Community Buy-In

Do I **have** to?

Is this **really necessary**?

What **benefit** is there to me?

Will this just take up my **time**?

"The main barrier I have to innovation at the moment is other [Finance] people – they **cannot see the benefit**, or understand that a bit of work now **can make life so much easier in the future**."

Interest / Involvement of Stakeholders

Innovations are likely to stall or fail if **key stakeholders** are not **involved** and **engaged**

"It is clearly a well-designed product that met their original brief, but is a lot less useful to me than [you] would expect.

If [you] had asked for my input, then it could be so much better, and **more useful"**

Interest / Involvement of Stakeholders

Do we **understand the needs** of future users?

What is the **purpose** of the innovation?

"It is not entirely clear why we are undertaking this project. No one has asked for it, **no one is clear about what we are trying to achieve**, we've just been told that we have to do it, and **it is assumed that people will be interested and use it afterwards**"

Interest / Involvement of Stakeholders

Is the interest **genuine**?

Are we putting effort into a project where the output will **potentially never be used**?

"**Sometimes people** say they want something even when they don't, because they **feel like they have to say yes**, or that it is something that they should want, **or more that they are told they should want**"

IT

Reliance on **Digital Services** departments to provide support

"Support from IT was **crucial to the success** of the project, but I did not have the ability to influence them to help, and **it was not necessarily in their interest**, as it was not on their workplan"

Time

How do we **find the time** to innovate?

"Most of this was done **in my own time**, in the weekends or in the evening. I enjoyed doing it, but **it's not sustainable** "

How can we remove barriers, or avoid them?

"Getting **continuous feedback** as we were developing the product worked **better than waiting until the end and hoping its ok**"

"A **key manager** pushed the whole process through"

"The project had **Executive support from the beginning**"

"Try and find out **who leads in this particular field and get their buy-in** to what you are trying to achieve, it usually opens more doors"

The projects that worked well usually had clear engagement from key stakeholders, and projects developed with them

How can we remove barriers, or avoid them?

"The solution we came to was **not the 'perfect' solution**, but it was the solution that was acceptable to the end user, and kept them on board. **It works, and it is being used**"

"**Being open to left-field suggestions** might take you somewhere better than you originally envisaged, be careful, this isn't always the case!"

"**Well-defined problem** - all clearly understood the problem and what the solution needed to do"

It helps to have a well-defined problem, but not to have a fixed solution in mind

How can we remove barriers, or avoid them?

Persuasion is an important skill in making many projects work

"I had to persuade one particular person that we had a solution that could solve the problem, and that **once the change was instigated, that it would not be taken away soon after**"
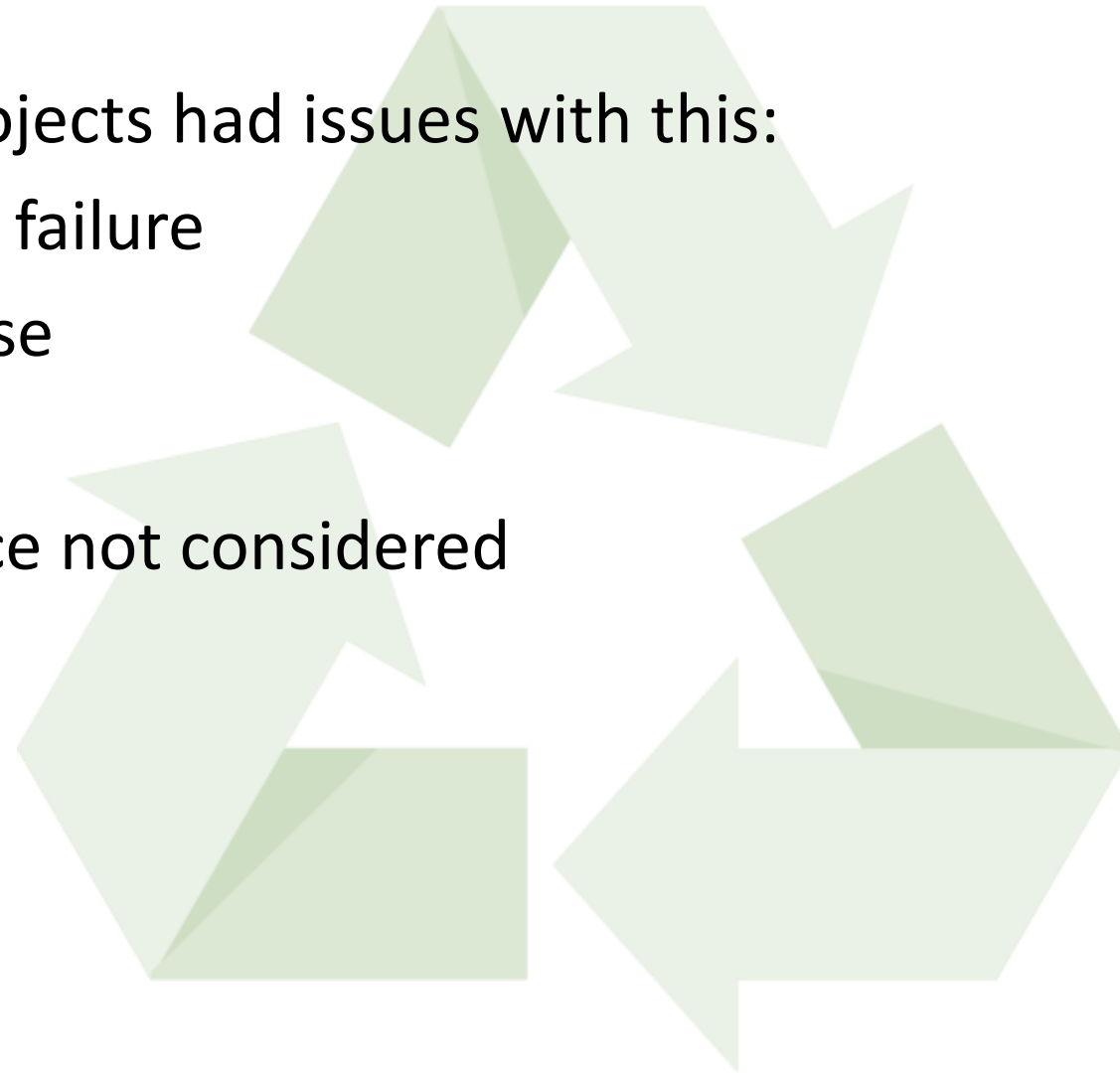
"You have to **understand** the people you are working with, and **the relationships they have with one another**"

Can we trust that the product of the innovation or process change will be sustained?

Sustainability of Solutions

A number of projects had issues with this:

- Single point of failure

- Disrepair, disuse

- Static solution

- Future resource not considered

Final Thoughts

- Purpose – what and why

- How do we find the time?

- Who are the key people? Are they interested? Can we make them interested?

- What does the solution need in order to be sustainable?

Thank You!