Setting up a Programme or Project 'War Room'

WHAT IS A 'WAR ROOM'?

A programme (or project) 'war room' might also be called a control/command/situation room. It can be a highly effective tool, depending on how it is set up and used. For some, it is a meeting space, for others it is where the programme (or project) work is done. This brief guidance is intended to help programmes and projects design a useful 'war room' space.

Be clear about its purpose

This could be to: provide a highly effective communication space/improve collaboration and integration across a complex programme/make it easy for everyone to stay informed/improve the speed and quality of decision-making.

Be clear about its primary users

Who is the war room for?

Is it just the project leaders? Does it include all team members? Is it a place you can invite stakeholders?

Determine a simple and succinct set of 'rules' for the room

How will the primary users make the best use of the war room?

Rules people have employed include:

- Board/information owners are responsible for keeping information up to date

- Don't change other people's information without checking in with them

Create a real estate map of the room to decide what visual information will be displayed where, this *may* include:

- Rules of the war room
- A Kanban board or similar (use moveable icons and/or avatars to show important info; e.g. decision required, danger/issue, blocked/unable to progress, the responsible person etc)
- The critical path
- Change/outcome performance
- Project status updates
- Financial status / budget tracking
- Issues board
- Risks board
- Process maps
- Geographical maps
- Photos of relevant locations, equipment or people
- Building or facility floor plans or photos
- Wireframes (for technical information)
- Announcements
- Blank spaces for new concept ideas/discussions

TIPS:

- Use a combination of electronic screens, whiteboards and areas for posters
- Keep visual displays up-to-date and meaningful — avoid unimportant clutter
- Have fun with it!

Tregaskis Brown Ltd
strategy to action