

# Workshop: Managing Defence OR

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Feedback to 31 ISMOR

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# Aim

- Discuss practices, perceptions and experiences related to the management of OR groups that address defence issues
- Identify how these differ between the different environments within which groups operate
- Provide participants with food for thought
- (Possibly) generate ideas for papers / activities at future ISMORs

# Managing defence OR – the key questions

- What capabilities and resources do we need?
- How do we acquire, maintain and develop them?

Capability & resources

Tasking

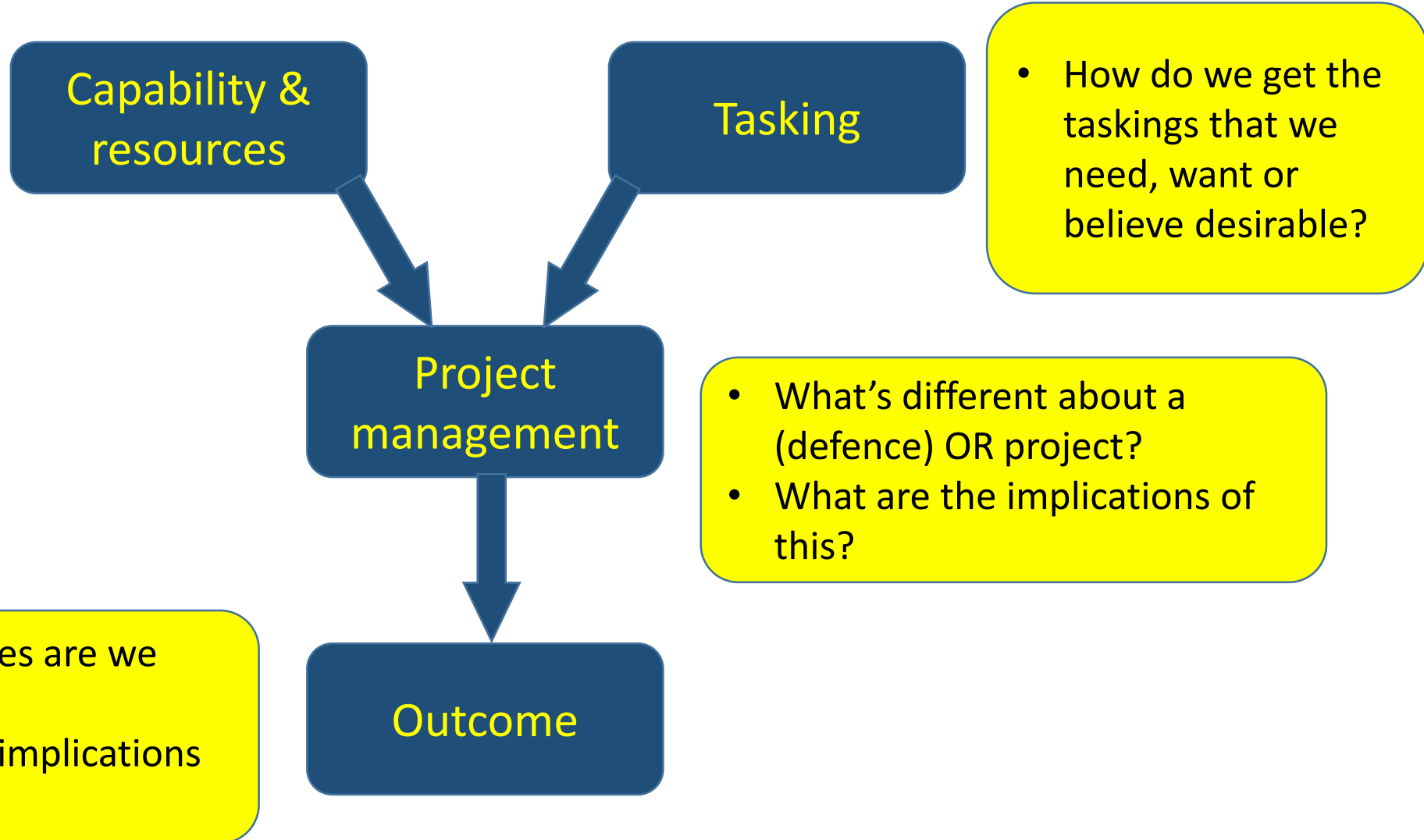
- How do we get the taskings that we need, want or believe desirable?

Project management

- What's different about a (defence) OR project?
- What are the implications of this?

- What outcomes are we looking for?
- What are the implications of this?

Outcome



# Managing defence OR – the key questions

- What capabilities and resources do we have?
- How do we acquire, maintain and develop them?

How do the answers vary between:

- different types of group?
  - Government - embedded team
  - Government - arm's length agency
  - Private sector - consultancy
  - Private sector - embedded team within larger company
- different nations?

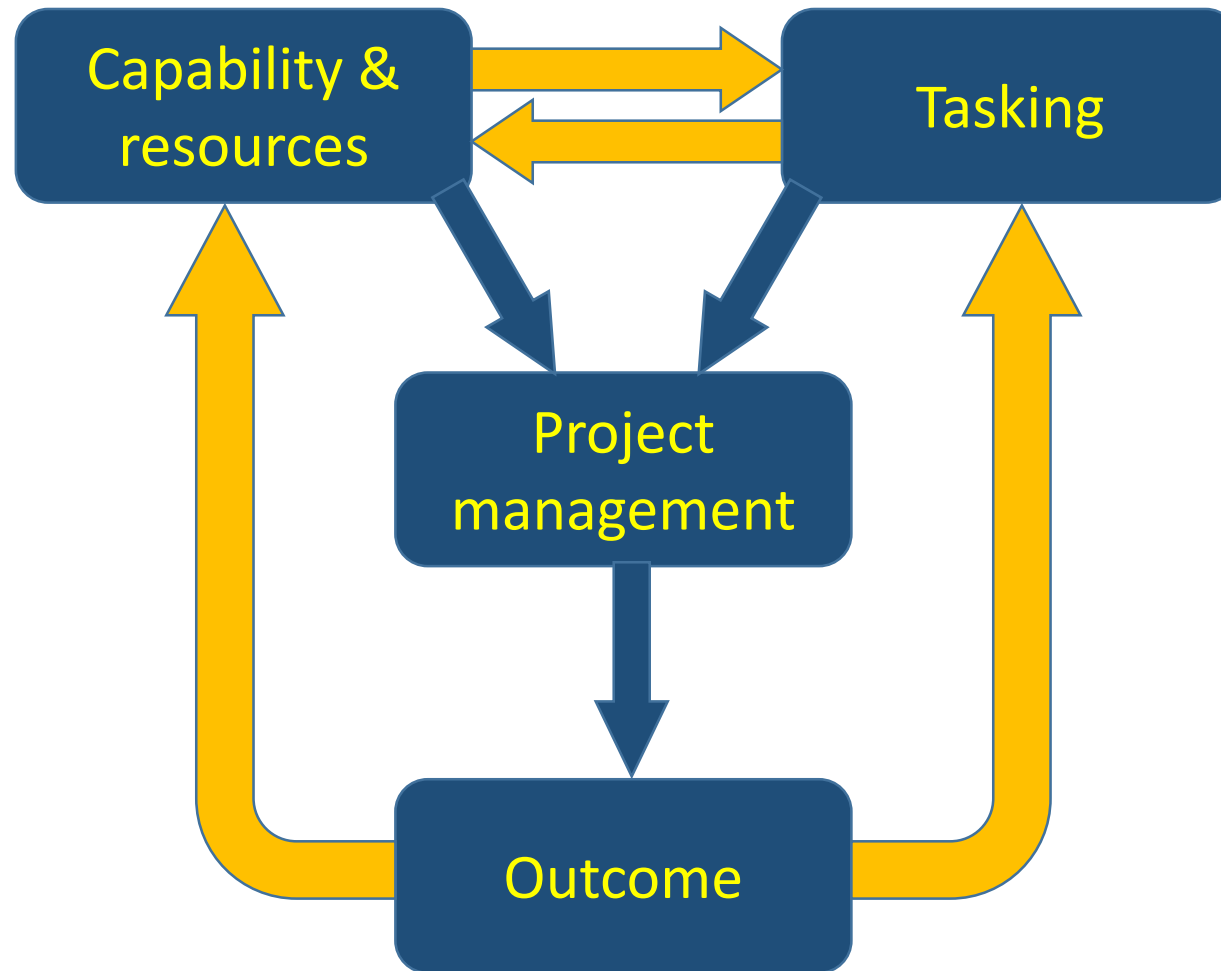
How do we get the things that we need, want or have desirable?

What a...  
...ions of

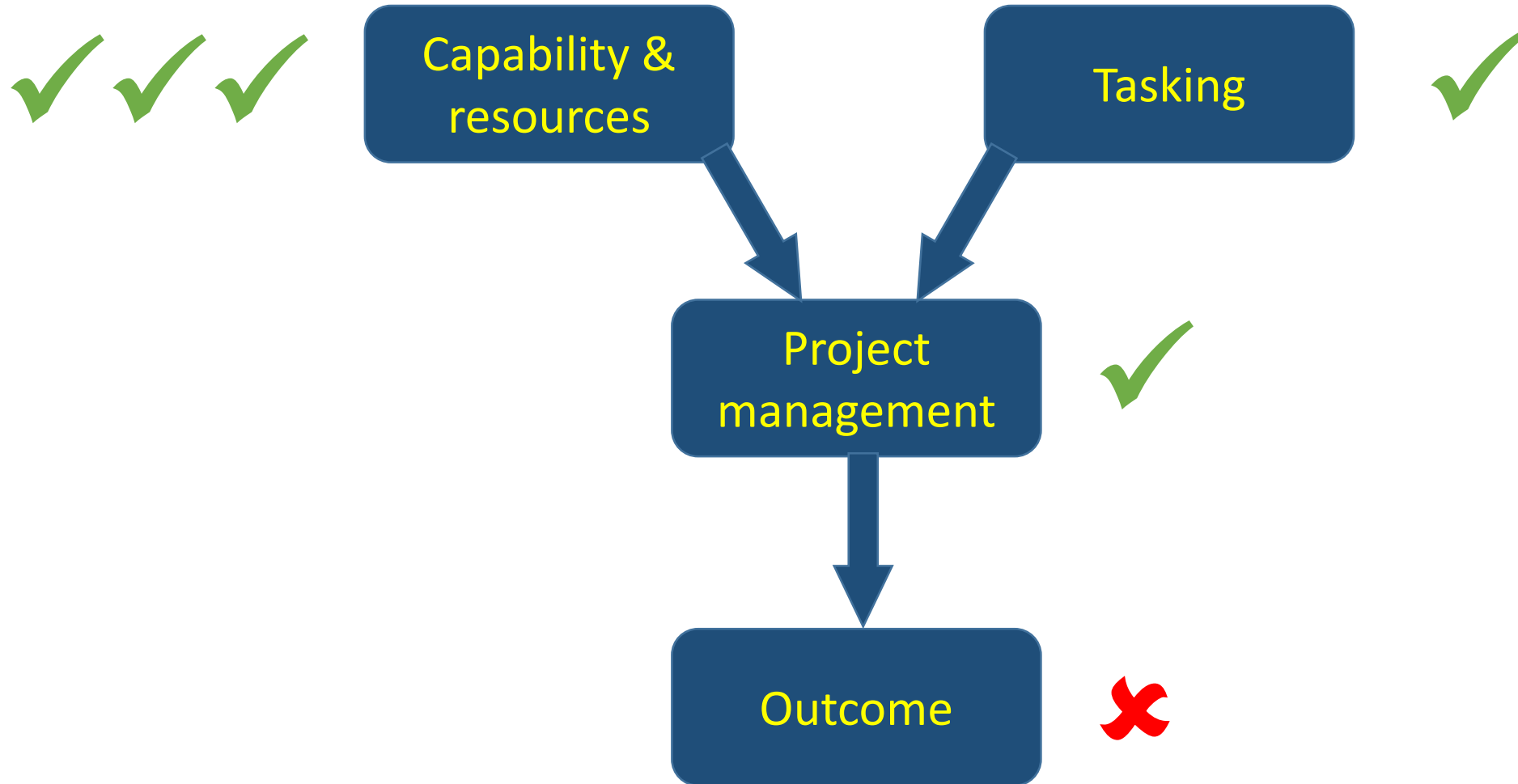
- What are we looking for?
- What are the implications of this?

Outcome

# Plenty of feedback in this process!



# What did we talk about?



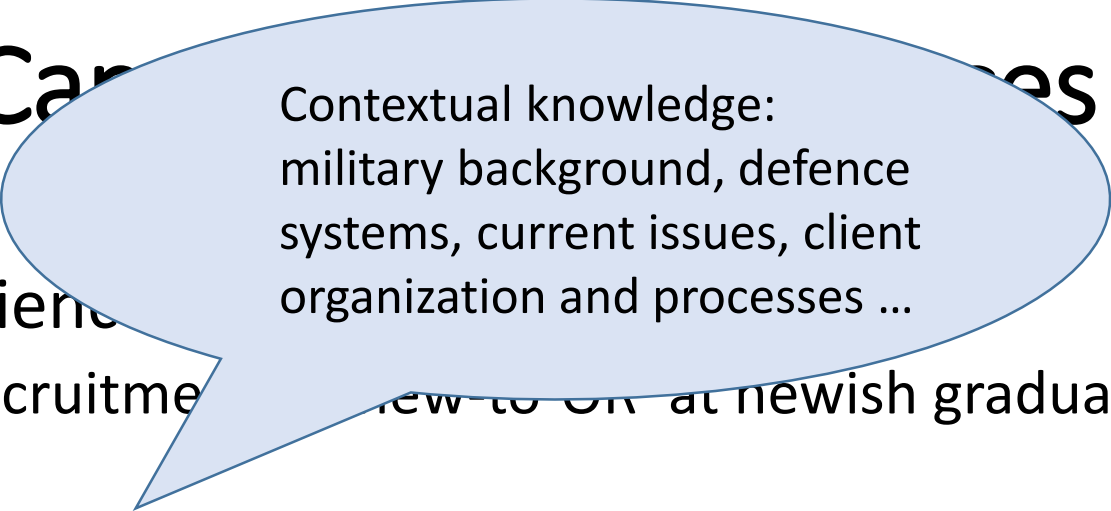
# Some key themes: Capability and resources

- ‘Suitably Qualified and Experienced People’
  - Most groups rely heavily on recruitment of ‘new-to-OR’ at newish graduate / post-graduate level
  - Importance of soft skills and credibility when interacting with clients
  - Writing skills

# Some key themes: Career Progress

- 'Suitably Qualified and Experienced'

- Most groups rely heavily on recruitment new to OR at newish graduate / post-graduate level
- Importance of soft skills and credibility when interacting with clients
- Writing skills

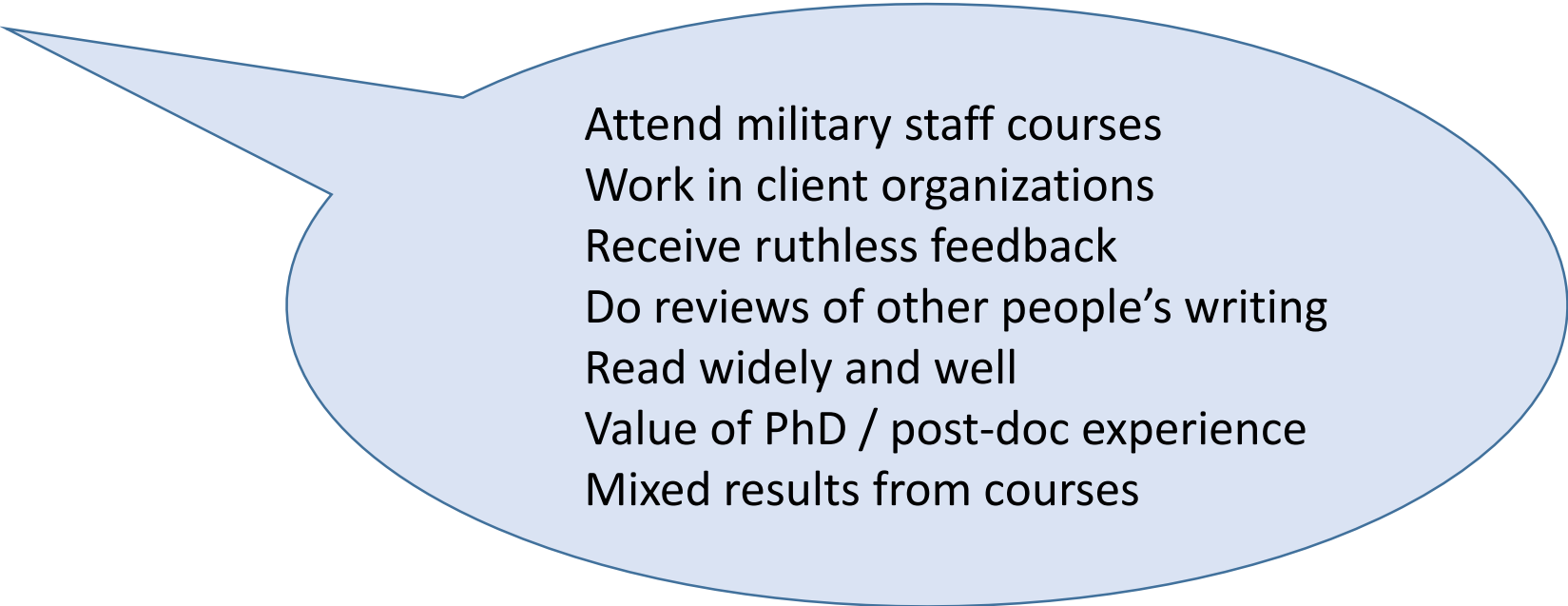


Contextual knowledge:  
military background, defence  
systems, current issues, client  
organization and processes ...



# Some key themes: Capability and resources

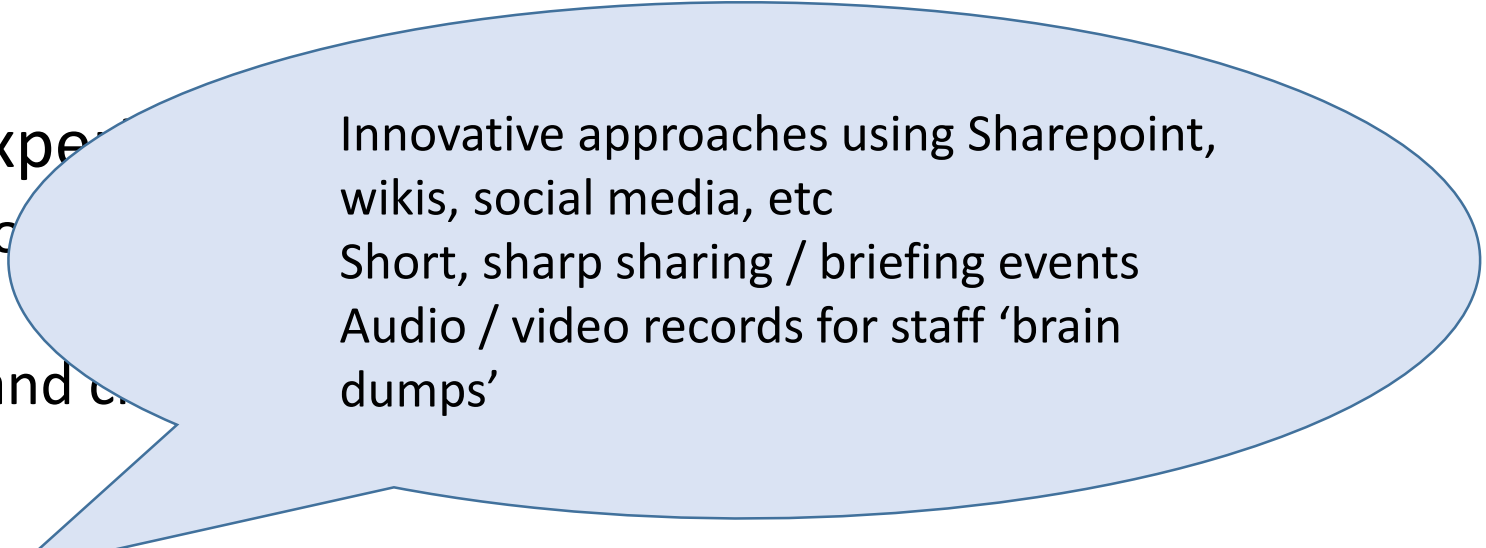
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Attend military staff courses  
Work in client organizations  
Receive ruthless feedback  
Do reviews of other people's writing  
Read widely and well  
Value of PhD / post-doc experience  
Mixed results from courses

# Some key themes: Capability and resources

- 'Suitably Qualified and Experienced'
  - Most groups rely heavily on post-graduate level
  - Importance of soft skills and communication
  - Writing skills
- Knowledge management



Innovative approaches using Sharepoint, wikis, social media, etc  
Short, sharp sharing / briefing events  
Audio / video records for staff 'brain dumps'

# Some key themes: Capability and resources

- ‘Suitably Qualified and Experienced People’
  - Most groups rely heavily on recruitment of ‘new-to-OR’ at newish graduate / post-graduate level
  - Importance of soft skills and credibility when interacting with clients
  - Writing skills
- Knowledge management
- Strategic relationships and (in UK, at least) trend to consortium contracts

# Taskings

- (Obviously) no magic formula to getting the right taskings; commercially sensitive area!
- Increased importance of bidding as consortia

# Project management

- Not like building a bridge - we may not know what we really have to do until we've almost done it!
- Obviously, (again) no magic formula ...
- ... but plenty of experience in coping with this that could be teased out and structured
- Issues when working as part of a consortium

# Working in a consortium

- Pros
  - Economy in bidding
  - Brings together best capabilities from range of organizations – no need for everyone to be able to do everything
  - Facilitates contributions from ‘non-standard’ players – e.g. universities, think tanks.
- Cons
  - Can promote stove-piping of capabilities and over-specialised staff – people and companies get used to just doing the same old bits and pieces; loss of ability to take the holistic view that is essential to good OR
  - Can result in isolation from direct interaction with client

# In summary ...

- Some very interesting discussions, with range of perceptions and experiences ... as well as the airing of well established consensus
- Plenty of ground left to cover!
- Should future ISMORs continue to try to bring in topics related to the professional practice of OR? If so, what form should they take?

