

Workshop: Managing Defence OR

30 July 2014

Feedback to 31 ISMOR

Roger Forder

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

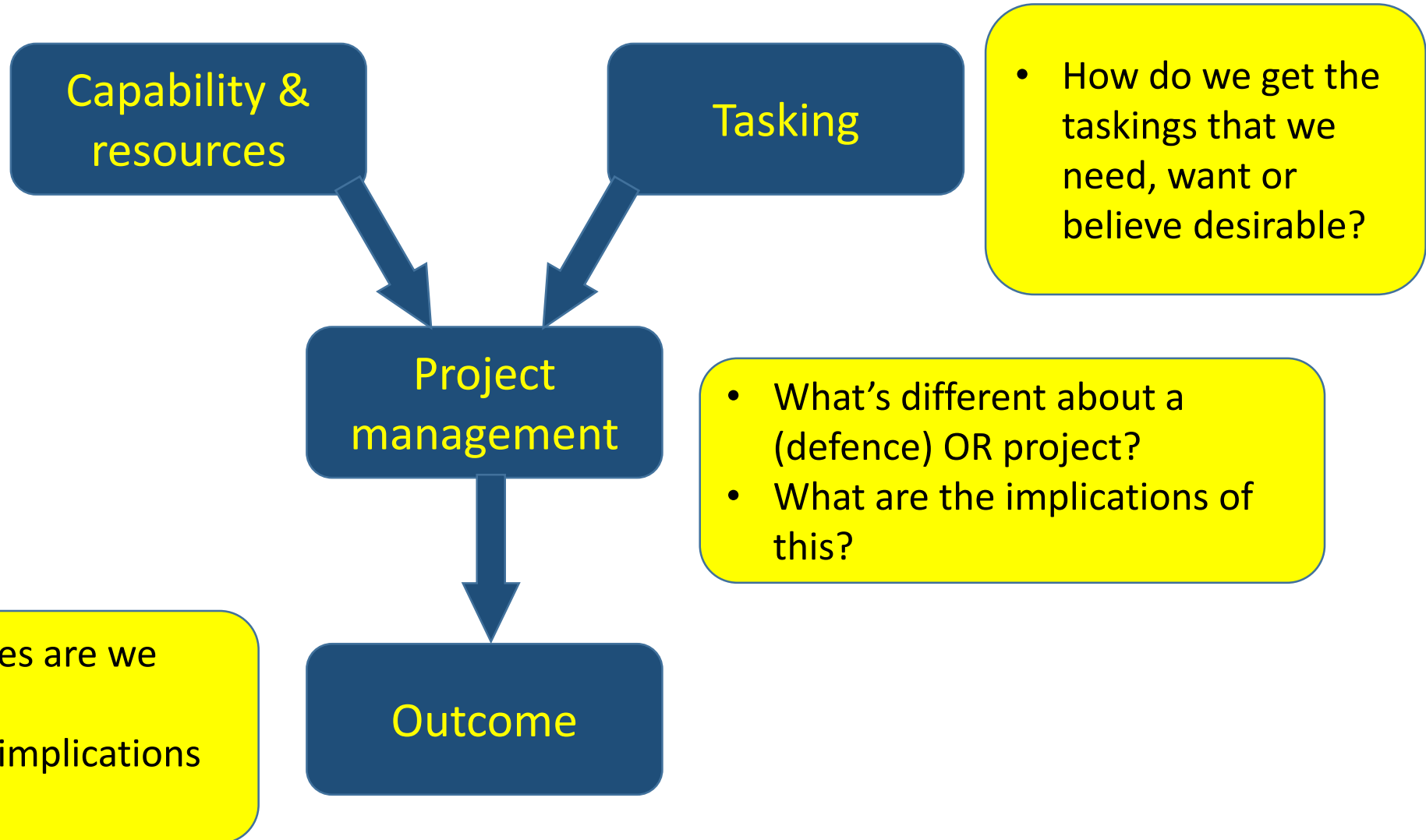
- How do we get the taskings that we need, want or believe desirable?

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 need?
- 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?

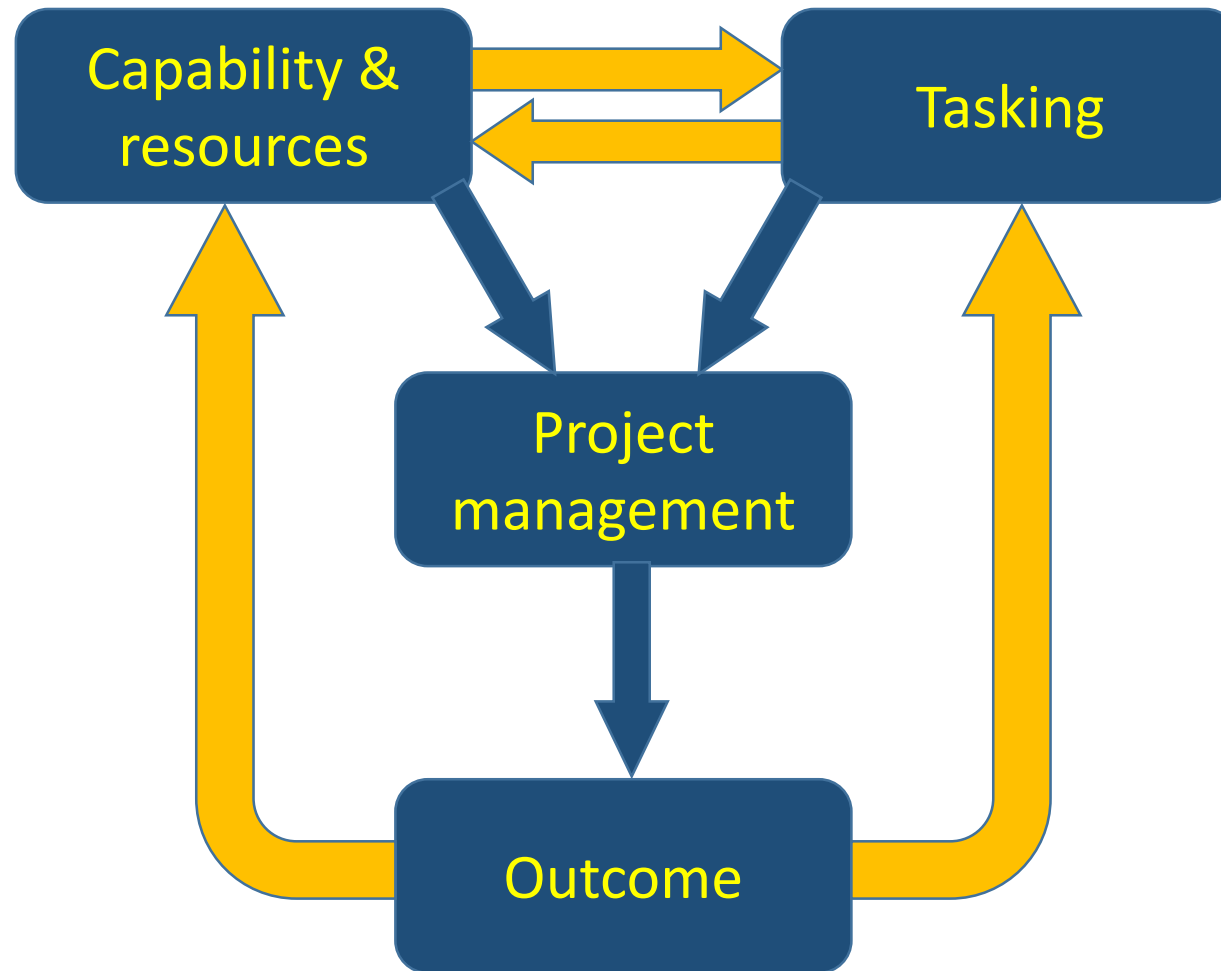
How do we get the things that we need, want or have desirable?

What a...
...ions of

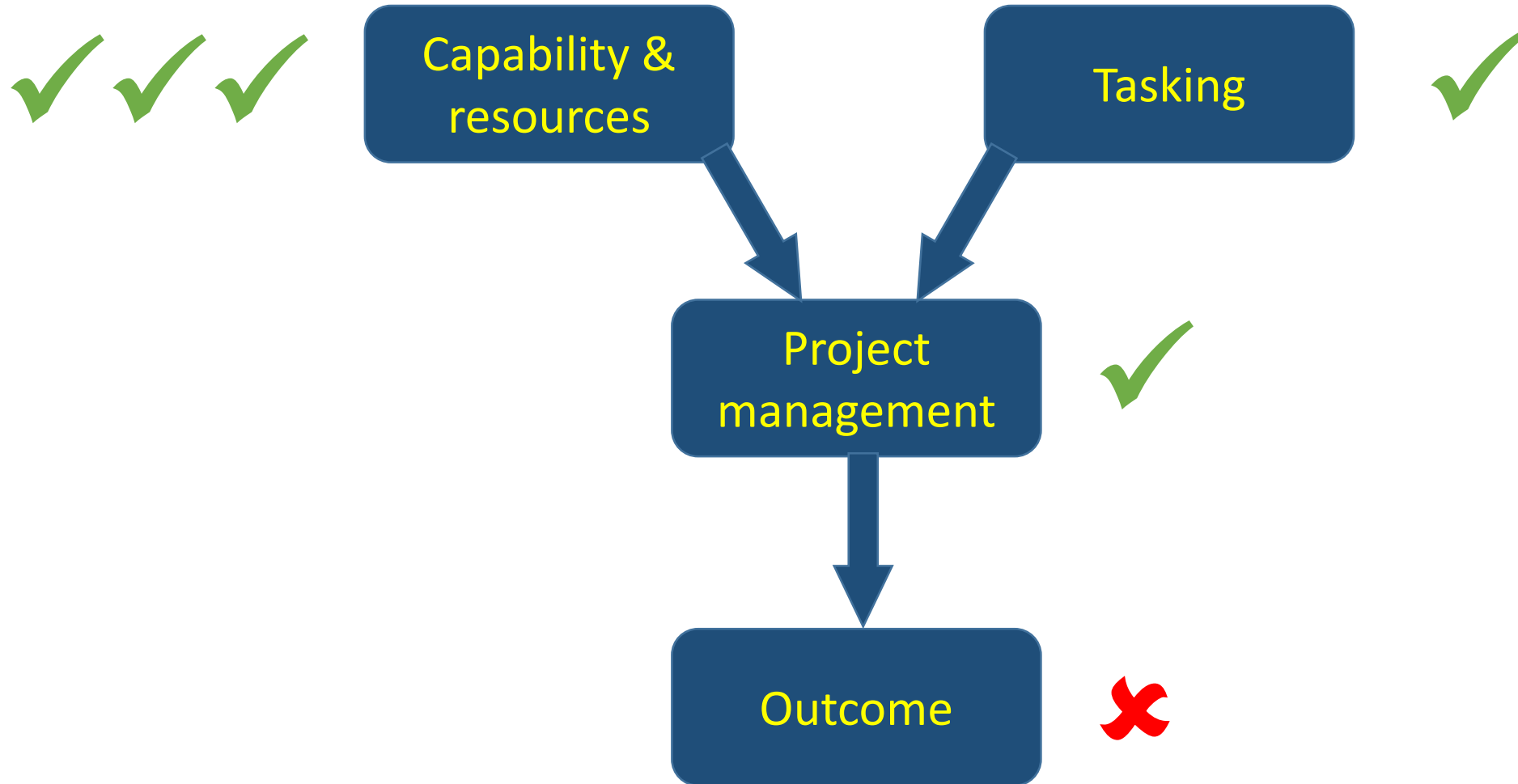
- What are we looking for?
- What are the implications of this?

Outcome

Plenty of feedback in this process!



What did we talk about?



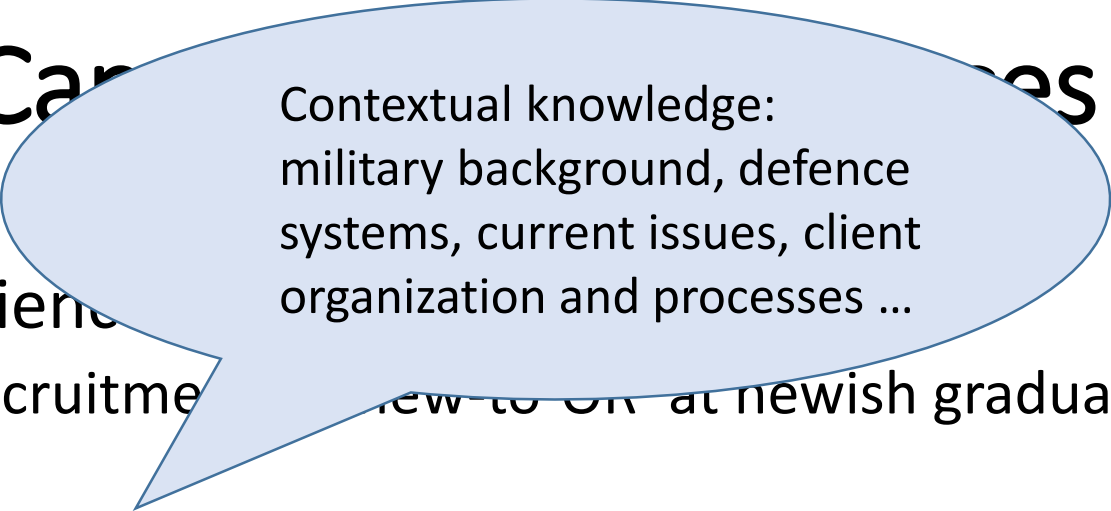
Some key themes: Capability and resources

- ‘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'

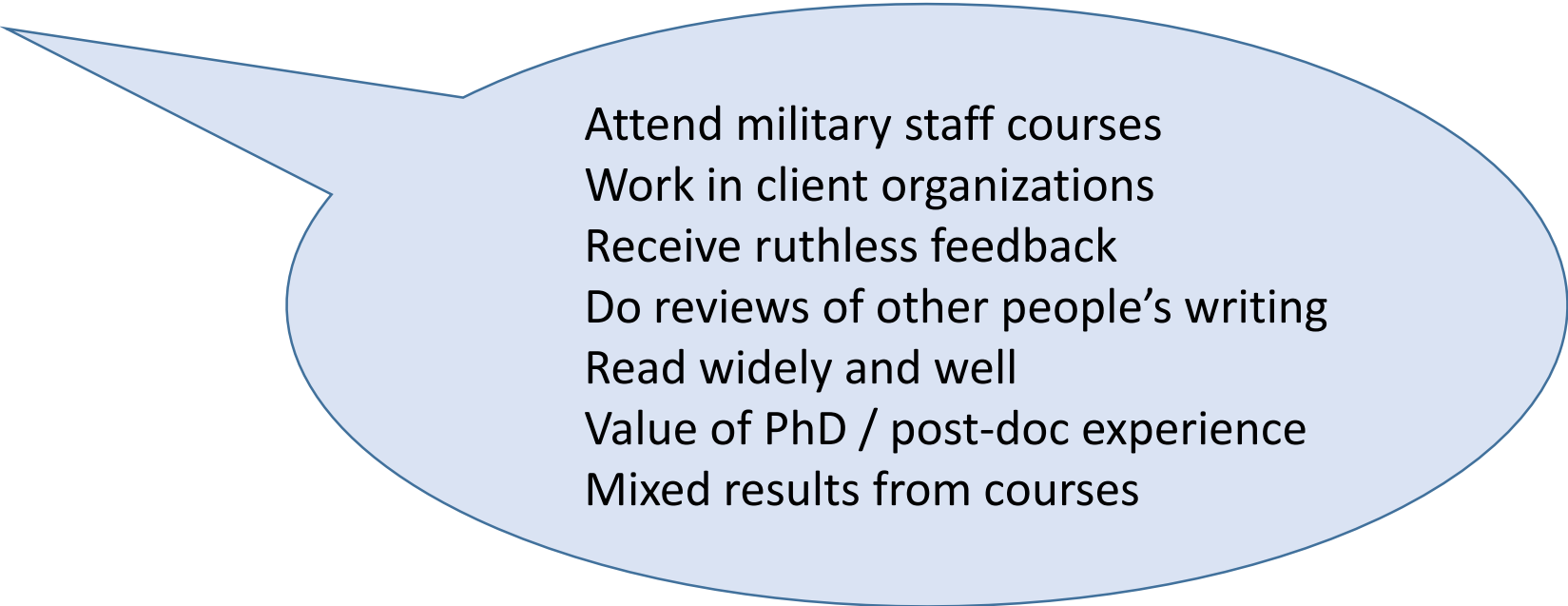
- Most groups rely heavily on recruitment new to OR at newish graduate / post-graduate level
- Importance of soft skills and credibility when interacting with clients
- Writing skills



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

Some key themes: Capability and resources

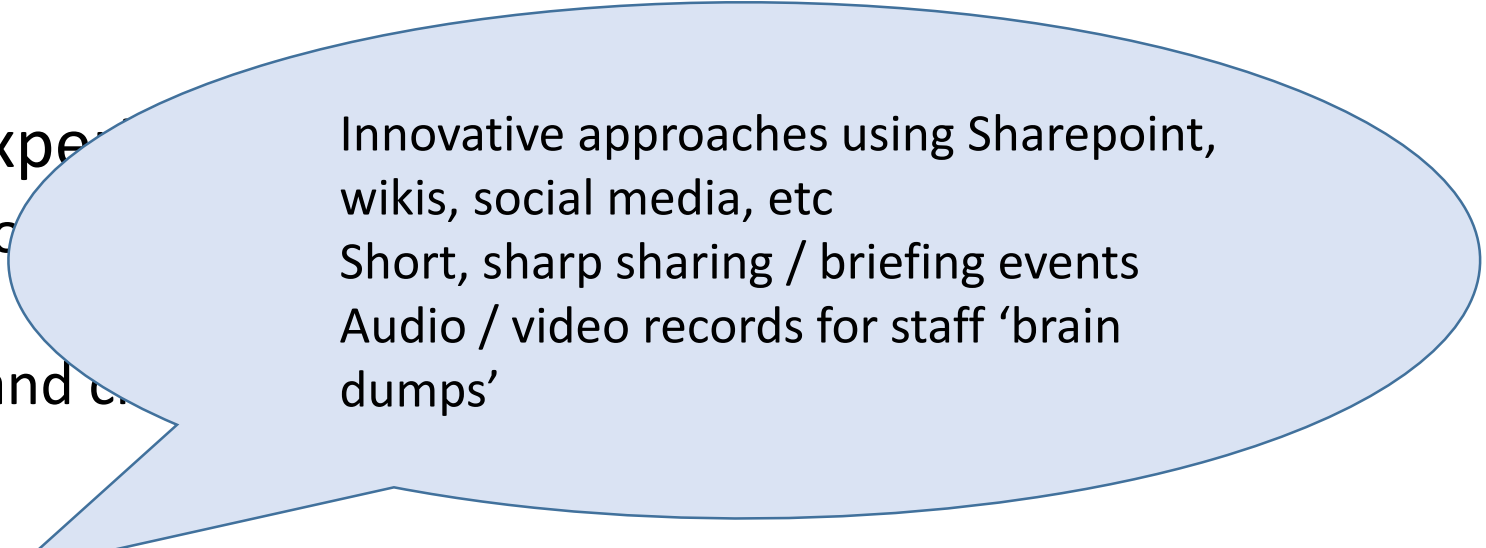
- ‘Suitably Qualified and Experienced People’
 - Most groups rely heavily on recruitment of ‘new-to-OR’ at newish graduate / post-graduate level
 - Importance of soft skills and credibility when interacting with clients
 - Writing skills



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?

