

# MSP™, PRINCE2® and IT development approaches

*RUP, DSDM, Agile, etc.- How do they relate?*

## Introduction

On the internet but also during courses and consultancy assignments there are often discussions about how especially PRINCE2® can be combined with IT project management approaches. This document aims to give clarity on this subject.

Because recently also attempts are made to combine IT approaches with MSP™ the initial scope of this document was widened to also give an answer to that question.

## The basics

How do the different models relate to each other:

- MSP™ is about strategic change; to help achieving this projects will be defined
- PRINCE2® (tactical) helps managing projects with a focus on business benefits
- To enable business benefits, technical development work is necessary to create the technical tools (operational).

The direct consequence of this view is that the methods or approaches can not be combined but should interface. They all have their own focuses.

What happens when a project is managed by a technical project manager? The entire focus will be on achieving technical tools and any input of users will be mishandled. But approaches like RUP, DSDM and Agile also talk about user input, so what is the difference?

A real PRINCE2® project manager will use the users' requirement to make sure that the technical people will produce an acceptable product. A traditional PM with an IT background, following IT approaches, will try to force users to tell them what they need within constraints set by technical constraints. The result will be that user input will always strongly be filtered or worse: it will be lip service. The users will be presented with a product they never asked for and because they have to agree, they will, without much thought, ask for change after change after change. Related to this an American manager once told his supplier:

*You produced what I asked for, but you did not produce what I needed.*



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Nico Viergever has over 20 years of experience managing change and consulting for improving project management and programme management.

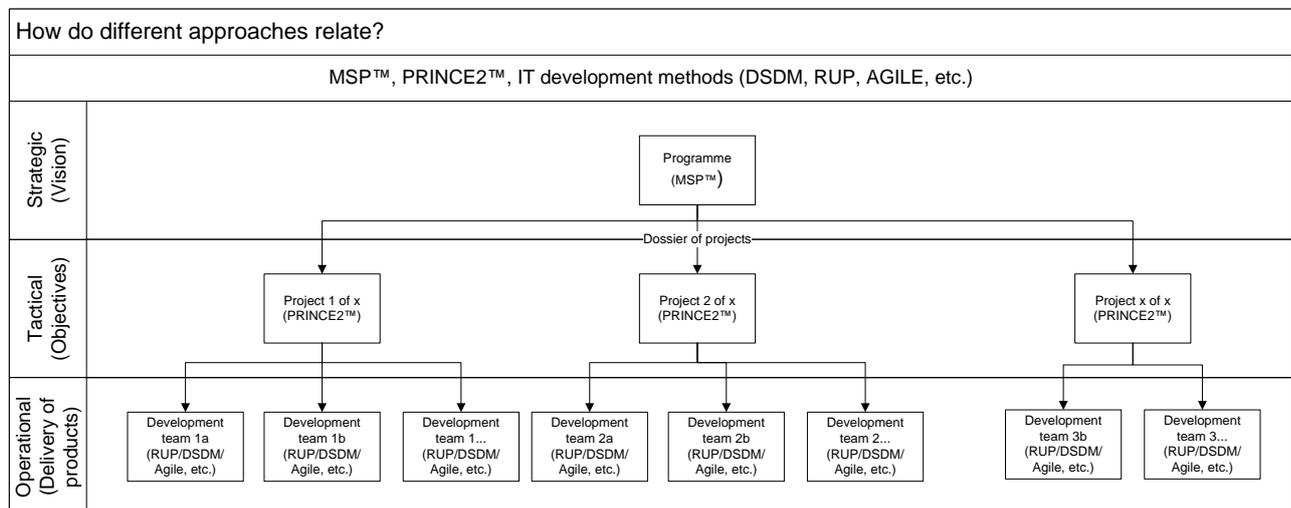
He is a prominent PRINCE2® en MSP™ expert and trainer.

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One of the most important principles of PRINCE2® is that the customer's business case drives the project. Because the customer and the supplier have conflicting business cases (the cost of the project forms the suppliers income), PRINCE2® suggest that the project manager should also come from the customer. A supplier's project manager will usually not be able to keep the project under control because of a conflict of interest and because of lack of focus on benefits. This is not just the case for external suppliers but also for internal suppliers: an IT department.

IT staff will usually object to the above. They do however not realise that they are the only staff objecting; the rest of the organisation agrees!

When we agree that projects should be focussing on business benefits rather than on creation of tools, the logical consequence is that supplier techniques should certainly be kept away from strategic decision making, unless the business is about those technical questions. IT suppliers could obviously, as part of their strategy, discuss IT approaches.



If this is all true, why do so many organisations on the highest level discuss IT approaches? IT professionals usually complain that the business is not interested and that this lack of interest undermines the effectiveness of IT. But why should the business be interested in IT? They should simply think what business product they need and IT should just translate this and deliver quality. Unfortunately in most organisations certainly IT is not mature enough or professional enough to fill this role: the role of service provider.

Combine this with the natural tendency of human beings to be egocentric (IT is so important, we make the business tick), and the explanation is – although simple – complete.

The result? Organisations have CIO's in the highest levels. They do not add anything to the organisation on a strategic level but insist that without them the organisation will not be effective. By the way, how many organisations have a manager of their external IT supplier in their Boards? A CIO is just another (internal) supplier, a service provider, so why would this person have a say on strategy?

Unfortunately a great number of organisations are also very “tool-driven”. Instead of thinking what they need, they waste a lot of effort and funds on the latest gadgets, giving IT again too much power.

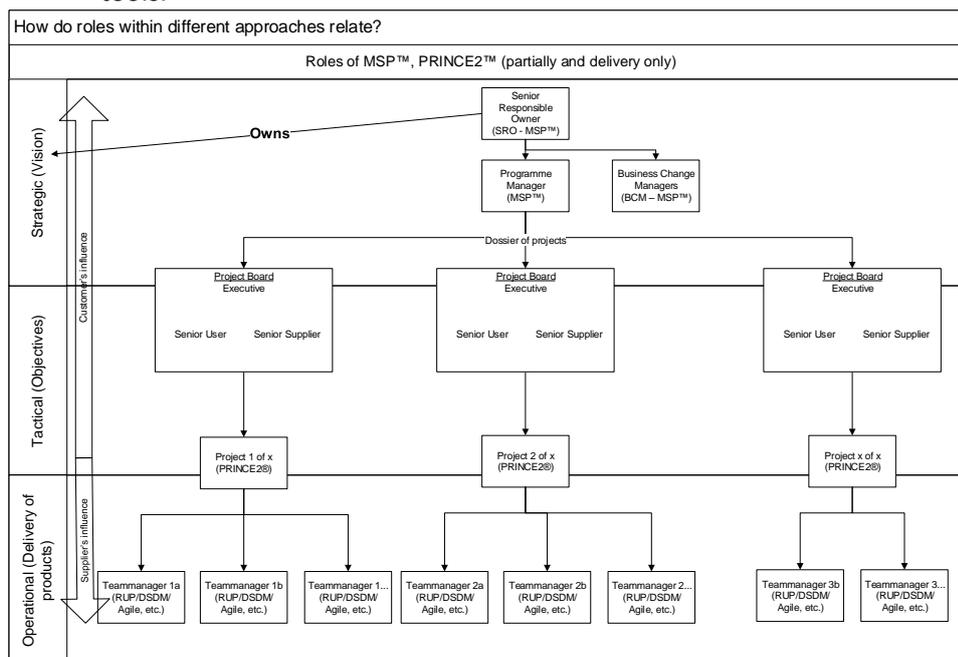
What does this do for non-IT staff? Cynicism, sarcasm and further lack of motivation are very common in organisations where IT has a more than appropriate role.

## Roles and responsibilities

Did we deviate from the subject? Not really. MSP™ and PRINCE2® have defined roles and responsibilities. Of course a supplier could be consulted for technical viability of the strategy but the supplier should never have a leading position unless it is the strategy of the technical supplier themselves; if the supplier is the business.

What would happen when a (internal) supplier takes the lead in a programme for strategic change?

- There will never be a consistent vision on the necessary change;
- In a programme the dossier of projects will not have one single goal;
- The user community will not show commitment or interest;
- A lot of effort will focus on creating unwanted and therefore very ineffective and expensive tools.



## Implementation of (IT) approaches

Every approach, whether an IT approach like ITIL, DSDM, RUP, Agile or Waterfall is just a tool. This also applies to business change approaches like MSP™ and PRINCE2®. So also here we should take into consideration why the approach is used. One thing is certain: it can never be part of a strategy to implement an approach, unless again the approach is part of the core business.

So when implementing ITIL or RUP or any other IT approach, there should never be a case to involve the user community other than IT staff. These are typical IT subjects and users are not interested;

why would they? The implementation is purely a part of the strategy of the IT supplier to change the internal behaviour and thus to provide a better service.

The same applies to MSP™ and PRINCE2®: they are just tools to improve the change process and to keep it under control better.



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Op mijn Website zijn de volgende documenten over PRINCE2® en MSP™ te vinden:

- [PRINCE2 in een notendop; de essentie van PRINCE2 in slechts vijf pagina's](#)
- [PRINCE2 Principes; worden de principes wel toegepast? Wat veroorzaakt de ineffectiviteit van PINO?](#)
- [PRINCE2 en MSP in relatie tot elkaar en andere methodes en aanpakken, zoals ITIL, PMBoK en Agile methodes. Raakvlakken en vooral culturele verschillen.](#)
- [PRINCE2 \(niet\) voor leveranciers; waarom PRINCE2 niet voor leveranciers bedoeld is en hoe zij dit model misschien toch kunnen toepassen](#)
- [Hoe voer je een methode als PRINCE2 in? Overwegingen, valkuilen en praktijkvoorbeelden](#)
- [PRINCE2 Life Cycle; hoe de Business Case zich ontwikkelt gedurende een project](#)
- [PRINCE2 Procesmodel; wat is de process flow en wie is verantwoordelijk voor welke processen?](#)
- [PRINCE2 tijdens Stages; een overzicht van PRINCE2 processen die tijdens Stages gebruikt worden](#)
- [Special: SPEER - ERP/SAP programma bij Defensie](#)
- [Special: Commissie Elias, ICT Projecten en cultuur](#)

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On the topics of PRINCE2® and MSP™, the following documents are available on my Website.

- [PRINCE2 in a nutshell; the essence of PRINCE2 is only five pages](#)
- [PRINCE2 Principles; are the 7 principles applied? What causes the ineffectiveness of PINO?](#)
- [PRINCE2 \(not\) for suppliers; why PRINCE2 is not aimed at suppliers and how they can possibly use the model](#)
- [Programmes and Projects; how do projects and programmes relate and interface? What is MSP and how to use MSP in combination with PRINCE2.](#)
- [How to implement a method such as PRINCE2? Considerations, pitfalls and examples](#)
- [PRINCE2 Lifecycle; the product life span versus the project life cycle](#)
- [PRINCE2 Process Model; shows the process flow and who is responsible for what processes](#)
- [PRINCE2 during Stages; details of the PRINCE2 processes used during Management Stages](#)
- [Method Integration; can ICT development approaches such as RUP, SCRUM, Agile, etc, really be combined with PRINCE2 \(and MSP\)?](#)
- [PRINCE2 and SLA; how does PRINCE2 cope with service level agreements and with support \(ITIL\) after the project?](#)

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