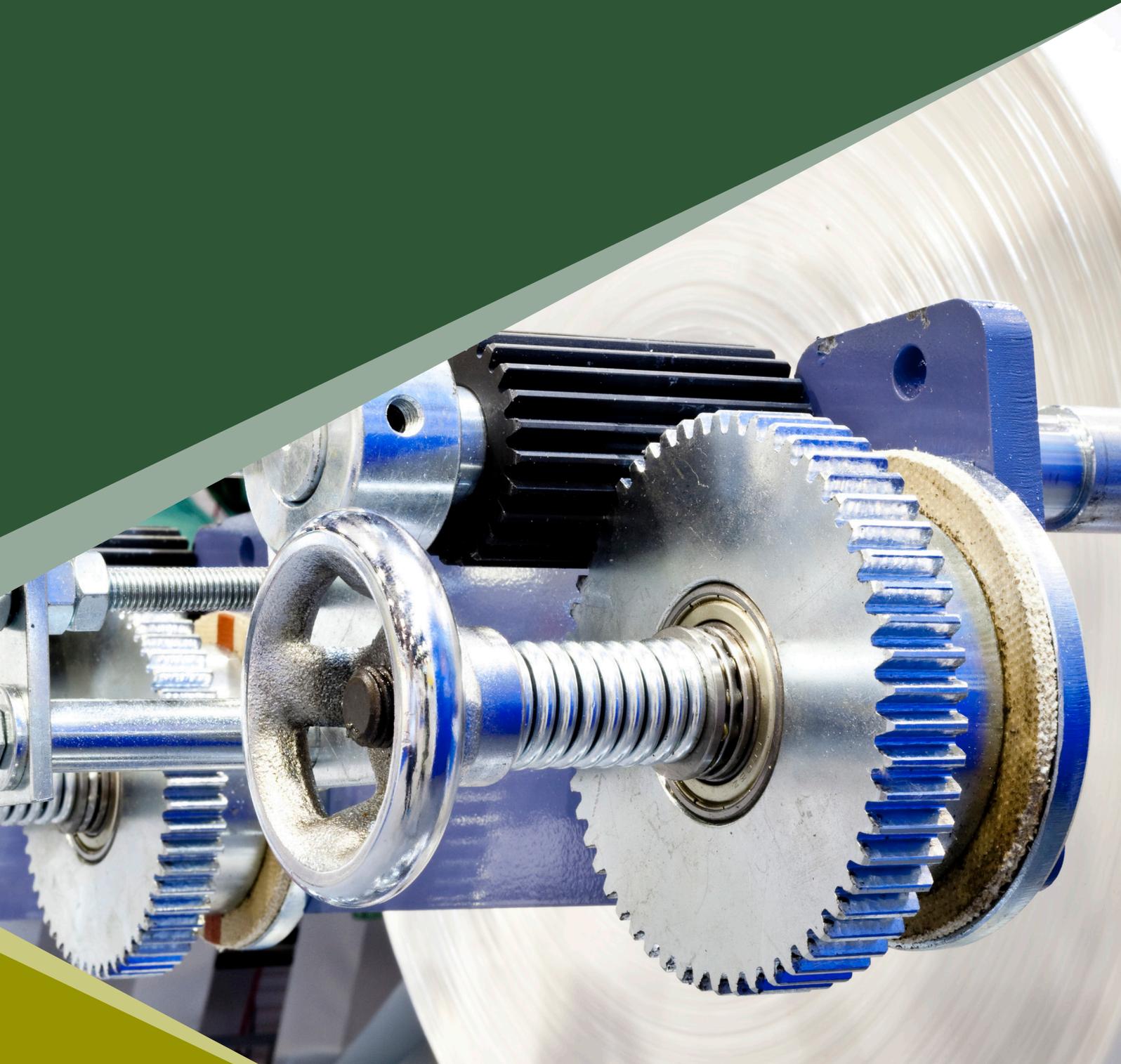


OAKLIN CAPABILITIES

# Business Improvement



# Introduction

**Organisations must constantly face up to numerous internal and external pressures. Market conditions are changing. Customer expectations are rising. Every day new business models, competitive threats and innovations emerge, causing continuous disruption to the traditional landscape in which businesses operate.**

As a result, businesses are under relentless pressure to find ways to deliver greater value at a lower cost, streamline processes, and leverage technological advances, in order to adapt and thrive in today's environment. But many organisations find it hard to do this in a way that is effective, sustainable and rewarding for their employees. It is unsurprising that Kaplan & Norton reported that between 60 and 80 percent of businesses fail to fully

execute their strategies<sup>1</sup>. Or, rather, fail to perform against the targets they have set.

Thankfully, the gap between strategy and business performance can be bridged. By applying an evidence-led, people-centric approach, root causes of underperformance can be identified and remedied, and a solid operational and cultural foundation from which to drive transformation can be established.

Effective business improvement enables organisations to manage operating costs and operational risk, increase resilience to external pressures, create growth and drive real performance improvements. Our business improvement approach can help you to achieve your strategic goals and sustain them in the long term.

<sup>1</sup> Kaplan, Robert S., Norton, David P.; *Mastering the Management System*, Harvard Business Review, <https://hbr.org/2008/01/mastering-the-management-system>.



# What is business improvement?



**Business improvement can be a variously understood concept. To some, business improvement means process improvement – optimising underlying processes and procedures in order to work more efficiently and effectively. For others, concepts such as operations or performance improvement may spring to mind.**

But at Oaklin, business improvement is more than this. For instance, to achieve operational effectiveness today it is essential that organisations consider the people side of transformation, such as organisational culture and employee engagement, not just analyses of processes and outputs.

At Oaklin business improvement is a collection of tools, techniques and methodologies that can

be applied to a business to yield predictable and sustainable improvements, both in terms of performance and organisational culture. It applies the most relevant aspects from a breadth of disciplines, such as Lean Six Sigma, Agile, change management and design thinking, to systematically uncover and remedy an organisation's key underlying operational challenges. Simultaneously, it ensures a culture of continuous improvement is woven into the organisational fabric, bringing sustained achievement of strategic goals and year-on-year gains.

At its heart, business improvement fundamentally enables organisations to work smarter and sustainably transform the way they operate.



*Business improvement helps businesses to identify and sustainably close the gap between strategy and business performance*





# What are the benefits of business improvement?



Oaklin's business improvement approach can deliver material financial, operational, customer, and people benefits.



# Oaklin's business improvement approach

Oaklin brings together practical experience across multiple industries, and knowledge of multiple improvement methodologies and tools, to create a best-in-class business improvement framework.

Our approach consists of three phases – **Diagnose, Define & Implement, Sustain** – which can each be deployed sequentially or as stand-alone engagements, depending on the specific need:

## 1 DIAGNOSE

Determines your business' current performance, root-causes of underperformance, the scale of improvement opportunity, and defines the top-level initiatives and plan. The diagnostic report output functions as a high-level business case for further investment.

## 3 SUSTAIN

Embeds the work implemented in the previous phase and tracks the benefits to enable the organisation to measure Business Improvement. This also provides the basis for continuous improvement by establishing a target-based framework and providing coaching and upskilling for stakeholders.

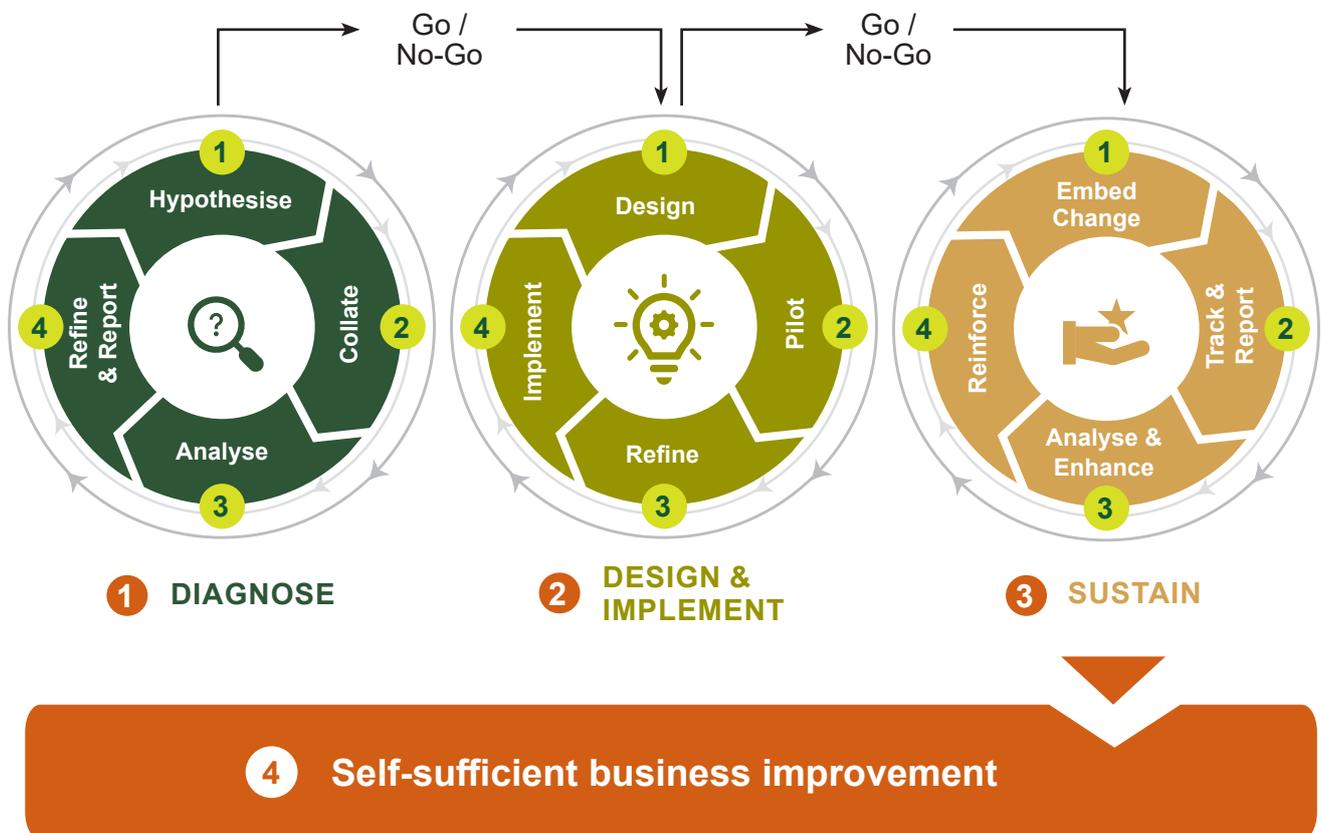


## 2 DESIGN & IMPLEMENT

Iteratively builds out the improvement interventions and delivery plan with your teams, using an iterative process of piloting and refinement. Once efficacy and suitability are confirmed, interventions are fully rolled out. Quick wins are delivered early.

Throughout the engagement, Oaklin will work with you and your team to ensure that everything, from intervention design to training, works within your business context. Our framework builds upon our collective experience of applying replicable solutions across a range of industries and environments, and our crafted toolkit ensures that we are ready to have immediate impact in your organisation. Yet we also recognise that your situation is unique, and will tailor our approach to your needs.

### Oaklin's business improvement approach



# Oaklin's business improvement goals

However you engage Oaklin on your Business Improvement journey, we will always strive to deliver five key goals:

To identify of the root causes of underperformance

1



To ensure tangible business benefits are delivered, and are sustainable

3



To design and implement evidence-led remedies for underperformance

2



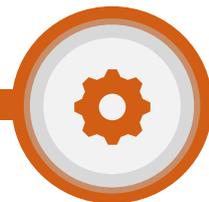
To embed a culture of operational excellence and continuous improvement

4



To leave the organisation with the tools to undertake 1 – 4 themselves

5





OAKLIN

## Case Study

# Harnessing data to drive £20m of in-year savings

A major building products supplier was looking to achieve sustainable performance improvement through the use of its data assets, but did not know where to start.

Oaklin was engaged to develop a data analytics strategy, roadmap and implementation plan, and associated business case. Beginning with interviewing the Leadership Team, and then conducting a deep dataset appraisal, Oaklin quickly ascertained priority areas for intervention, and delivered evidenced insights which exceeded the clients' expectations in terms of in-year financial benefits. Additionally, Oaklin designed the new analytics strategy with the people side of change firmly in mind, given the organisation was already undertaking a company-wide transformation programme.

Oaklin delivered a compelling vision of the future, case for analytics, and structured change management plan, all of which were adopted; added to which we identified over £20m of in-year savings to the bottom line.

# Oaklin's principles for effective business improvement

At Oaklin, we ensure all business improvement engagements adhere to five key principles, which in our experience underpin effective and sustainable outcomes for our clients:



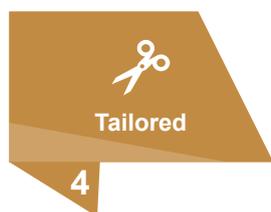
Our approach uses scientific method and data-driven analyses to uncover opportunities and build the evidence required for change. This allows leaders to make informed decisions and predict the likely outcome of an initiative, ensuring risk is effectively managed. Employees and managers, on the other hand, have the information to understand the rationale and impact of the change, mitigating resistance and ensuring future buy-in.



We help you to identify and implement user-centric improvements that deliver value to your internal and external customers. This focus ensures that, regardless of whether it is an employee using a process, or a buyer of your product or services, your organisation is best placed to deliver value effectively and efficiently. We also ensure that everyone is brought into change successfully, helping to minimise disruption and attain the benefits sought.



We employ a focussed and targeted approach to home in on the key business issues at hand, utilising analytics and on-the ground process knowledge to ensure rapid identification of improvement opportunities. Our efforts are focussed on what matters most and where the biggest improvement gains lie.



Oaklin tailors its business improvement approach to every engagement. Distilled from our practical experience across multiple industries and disciplines, our framework utilises the most important aspects from the wide variety of proven methodologies available but delivers a bespoke response to the specific challenge. This means that we are free to use the most relevant tools for each individual situation, and free of the dogma associated with rigid methodologies.



We work with you to co-develop initiatives and build lasting capability throughout the organisation. In doing so, we ensure that when we step away, benefits continue to be achieved and your organisation is best placed to undertake its own future business improvement initiatives.



# We use evidence, not opinions, to predict outcomes and inform decisions

We believe that data and evidence is critical to the success of any business improvement programme. Only through use of data, analyses, and insight, can you be certain that root-causes for underperformance have been pinpointed and the corrective actions taken are the right ones.

Oaklin will help you move past statements like, “oh, everyone knows that data isn’t right”.

Together we will work with your teams and build the capability to seek out the essential data required, understand what the evidence conveys, and make corresponding localised changes where necessary. From your perspective, we will help your teams improve the information that they provide to you and enable you to take decisions with an understanding of the likely outcome.

A thinking and aware organisation, with employees that take steps to improve their areas of responsibility, can attain significant and sustainable business improvements, whilst also increasing employee engagement and satisfaction.



## Case Study

# Delivering sustainable operating cost reduction

A global aerospace engineering firm sought a step-change reduction in its global operating costs across all of its back-office functions. This was to be achieved through the adoption of standardised end-to-end business processes, with transactional activity delivered by global shared services, operating a rationalised, cloud-based suite of IT systems, and a consistent, controlled data model.

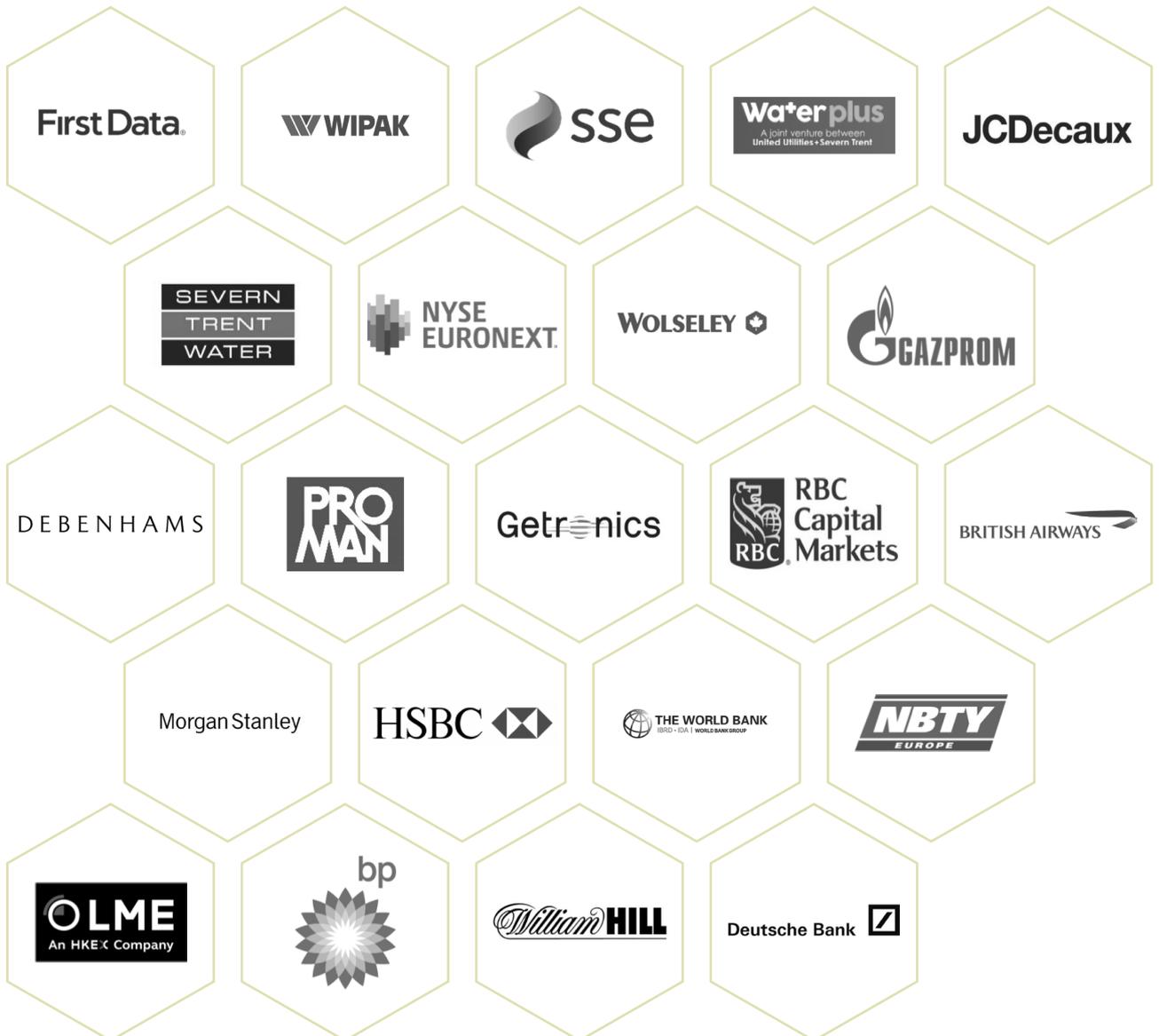
Oaklin designed a “business process optimisation” approach for a defining target operating model, future enterprise architecture and change roadmap for each cross-functional business process. After proving the approach, Oaklin was asked to lead the global programme, helping the client to realise annualised savings exceeding £100m.

# Our clients



**Our clients include FTSE 100 and Fortune 500 companies across multiple sectors.**

Our sector experience includes Energy and Resources, Engineering, Financial Services, Health, Hi-Tech, Manufacturing, Media, Public Sector, Retail, Shipping and Telecommunications.



# Summary

**Remaining competitive in any market is getting harder and harder. Business improvement is a critical discipline that provides the means to ensure that your organisation does. It combines strategy, change management, data and analytics, organisational psychology, and business excellence, to attain one goal: superlative customer value that improves your top and bottom line.**

When executed poorly, it is seen as a disruptive cost-cutting exercise that reduces headcount and demoralises the workforce, only for those costs and headcount to creep back in the medium term. Effective business improvement

instils an agile, problem solving mentality that empowers all staff, focusses relentlessly on improvement, creates true customer value, and delivers sustainable business performance.

Marrying several leading methodologies and toolsets, Oaklin's approach to business improvement is solid. We know it works too, having been tried and tested across industries and services – from healthcare to aerospace, and technology to supply chain. Our business improvement approach helps organisations to identify and sustainably close the gap between strategy and business performance. We would love to support you in unearthing your true potential.

# About Oaklin

**Oaklin is an independent management consultancy firm. We focus on understanding and solving our clients' biggest challenges. We specialise in placing small teams of experts who typically work alongside our clients' teams, bringing the capability or capacity enhancements that are needed.**

Our clients value our versatility and practical expertise, underpinned by our core principles of trust, integrity and openness. As a result, over 90% of our work comes from repeat business at existing clients and referrals into new clients.

We specialise in taking a select number of high-impact roles that make a real difference to an

organisation. We do not seek to take over or deploy large pyramids of juniors. We have no internal targets or commercial alliances. As a result, we are frequently trusted by our clients to help select, negotiate with, and manage other third parties, including global systems integrators.

We advise leaders, shape transformation and lead delivery, connecting strategy with execution and translating aspiration into reality. We are always happy to stand by our advice. We believe in our recommendations and are willing to implement them if asked. We recognise that you engage consultants for when things are hard, not for when they are easy. Oaklin will stand with you to understand and help resolve your biggest challenges.





## Get in touch

Please contact us if you would like to discuss any elements of our Business Improvement capability, or how Oaklin could partner with you to deliver lasting change within your business.

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