



# Derisking major IT change; ensuring fast and successful transitions

Spike hosted round table discussions with retail tech leaders under Chatham House rules.

Thanks to all who took part, here's a snapshot of the discussion and our key recommendations.

# 4 areas we explored

 1. Why do major IT programme changes slip? How to avoid this upfront.

 2. Full ecosystem testing: thinking end to end.

 3. People or systems: where are the typical failures and how to minimise risk.

 4. Stress testing: what volumes should you test to?



# Round table takeaways

Our round table tech leader audience outlined these key points as their major takeaways for further thought and action

Get the basics right

Don't lose sight of why we are doing technology change

Stakeholder engagement is key

Culture, business, and engagement should be considered at every stage

Define test strategy at the start of each project

Actively resolve dependencies to support the best strategy

Value stream mapping of testing to understand where the key test scenarios are

People drive success

Involve all relevant teams with UAT and test your rollback plan

Change should be exhilarating!

Focus on product, not just technology or systems

The common challenge with delivering IT change is people and process, not systems

# Things to think about and ask yourself for your next big change programme



## Avoid slippage upfront

Think about the last major programme that slipped – what was the first warning sign you wish you'd taken seriously?

- Where did slips really start: strategy, funding, scope, governance, or testing assumptions?
- What do boards consistently underestimate about retail change?
- What due diligence can you insist on before green-lighting a major programme?
- Have you ever knowingly started a programme that wasn't 'ready'? Why?!



## End to end testing

When you say 'tested', what does that actually mean in your organisation?

- Which parts of the ecosystem are most often assumed rather than tested (data, integrations, 3rd parties, legacy)?
- What breaks first in retail when you only test in silos?
- Consider how you can test end-to-end flows earlier.
- Are you clear on who owns E2E confidence – delivery, QA, architecture, or the business?



## People vs systems

Be honest, do your programmes fail more because of people, or because of systems?

- Where do skills gaps show up too late (product, testing, SI management, data)?
- What behaviours increase risk even when the tech is 'good enough'?
- Do incentives (bonuses, deadlines, exec pressure) quietly undermine delivery?
- What's one people-related risk you could now plan for explicitly?



## Stress testing

What's the biggest assumption your organisation makes about peak volume?

- Do you test for last year's peak, worst-case failure, or future growth?
- How do promotions, bad data, or partial outages change your volume model?
- Who signs off that performance risk is 'acceptable'?
- Have you ever tested something you secretly hoped would fail – just to see what happens?
- Is stress testing about confidence – or about learning how you manage failure?



# Spike helps retailers deliver technology change with confidence by making quality and go-live risk visible, early, and actionable.

## What we help with

- Go-live readiness & assurance
- Retail replatforming & transformation
- Peak & promotional risk reduction
- Performance, resilience & non-functional quality
- Executive-level clarity on delivery risk

## How Spike is different

- Testing-led assurance, not testing for testing's sake
- Evidence you can stand behind in the boardroom
- Retail-first, not generalist
- Designed to increase flow, not slow teams down

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