Product Operations - Counterproposal

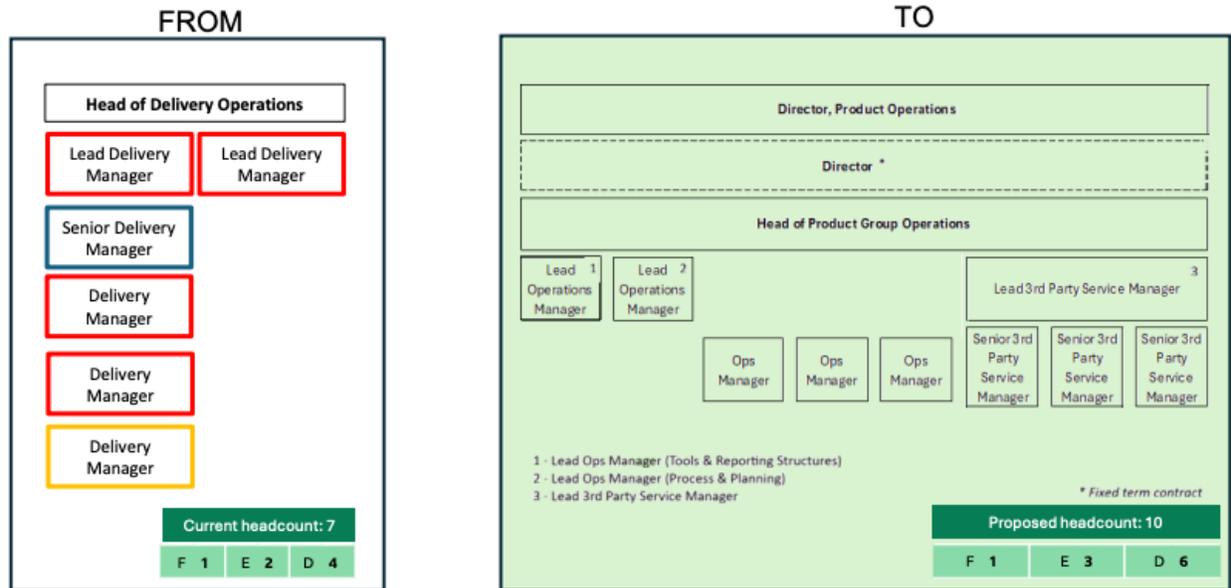| State:	Version 1.1
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Purpose and context

This document is a counter-proposal to the Product Operations organisational design shared in November 2025.

It focuses on **Product Group Operations**, a core sub-function within Product Operations, and is intended to **strengthen** the proposed direction rather than challenge it. The aim is to ensure the organisation can operate effectively at scale, particularly in the context of reduced embedded delivery support.

PROPOSAL – PRODUCT GROUP OPERATIONS

Works in partnership with Product & Design, Engineering & Data and Transformation to provide the shared systems, services and operational practices that keep Product Group running smoothly. Focuses only on PG-wide infrastructure – the common tooling, reporting, supplier services and rhythms that enable teams to deliver efficiently, at pace and with confidence.

FROM

Head of Delivery Operations

Lead Delivery Manager | Lead Delivery Manager

Senior Delivery Manager

Delivery Manager

Delivery Manager

Delivery Manager

Current headcount: 7

F 1 | E 2 | D 4

TO

Director, Product Operations

Director *

Head of Product Group Operations

Lead 1 Operations Manager | Lead 2 Operations Manager | Lead 3rd Party Service Manager 3

Ops Manager | Ops Manager | Ops Manager | Senior 3rd Party Service Manager | Senior 3rd Party Service Manager | Senior 3rd Party Service Manager

1 - Lead Ops Manager (Tools & Reporting Structures)
2 - Lead Ops Manager (Process & Planning)
3 - Lead 3rd Party Service Manager

* Fixed term contract

Proposed headcount: 10

F 1 | E 3 | D 6

Proposed Portfolio Operations

Specifically, this document:

- Surfaces the **key operating risks** inherent in the proposed design
- Sets out the **design principles** required to mitigate those risks
- Proposes a **clearer, more accountable operating model** that preserves the intent of the original proposal while improving effectiveness, responsiveness, and sustainability

The counter-proposal is designed for a future state where the product operating model is fully embedded and operating at scale, rather than optimised for transitional or interim structures.

Scope: Product Group Operations

For clarity, Product Group Operations is treated as two distinct but connected sub-functions:

Portfolio Operations

Owns the **end-to-end operating system** that turns strategy into plans, plans into execution, and execution into insight and value. This includes:

- Planning, prioritisation, and intake
- Work management and flow
- Portfolio insight and reporting
- Funding, governance, and decision cadence

Third-Party Engagements

Ensures the BBC can **safely, strategically, and effectively** use external suppliers to flex capacity and capability. This includes:

- Enabling informed sourcing and commercial decisions
- Providing governance and oversight of supplier performance and risk
- Providing forward-looking cost and demand insight
- Enabling third-party engagements to run reliably & compliantly at scale

Portfolio Operations

Portfolio Operations– risks in the proposed design

The current proposal introduces a number of **systemic risks** that undermine its objectives when taken together.

Key Risks

Risk	Description	Status
PO Risk 1: Fragmented system ownership and accountability	Where Portfolio Operations accountability is split across roles (e.g. process vs tooling), ownership of outcomes becomes blurred. Integration work shifts upward to the Head of Product Operations, creating bottlenecks, reintroducing dependency, and making it difficult to hold any single role accountable for system-level outcomes.	Mitigated — addressed through a single Lead owning Portfolio Operations end-to-end and clear vertical ownership beneath it.

PO Risk 2: Strategic capacity diluted by coordination overhead	When senior roles are required to coordinate work across fragmented responsibilities, time and effort are spent stitching the system together rather than improving it. Over time, output scales by adding people rather than increasing clarity, leverage, or effectiveness.	**Mitigated (by design)** — reduced through a smaller, senior team with direct outcome ownership rather than coordination responsibility.
PO Risk 3: Change does not land or sustain without active stewardship	The model assumes that standards, tooling, and governance will be adopted organically. In the absence of embedded delivery or change agents, there is a high risk that new ways of working are inconsistently adopted, weakly reinforced, or decay over time, increasing reliance on external change support.	**Partially mitigated** — improved through clearer ownership and system-level design, but still dependent on adoption, reinforcement, and capacity to steward change.
PO Risk 4: Insight exists but is not decision-ready or actionable	Without consistent adoption and data quality, Portfolio Operations may produce insight that is observational rather than catalytic. Where authority to act is unclear or data confidence is low, issues surface late and decisions are delayed or deferred.	**Partially mitigated** — strengthened through clearer ownership and standards, but dependent on data quality,

		adoption, and decision discipline.

Portfolio Operations – design principles

The counter-proposal is guided by four principles:

1. **Single-point accountability** for Portfolio Operations end-to-end
2. **Small, senior, high-leverage team** over layered coordination
3. **Clear vertical ownership** without line-management drag
4. **A genuinely elevated Head of Product Operations role**
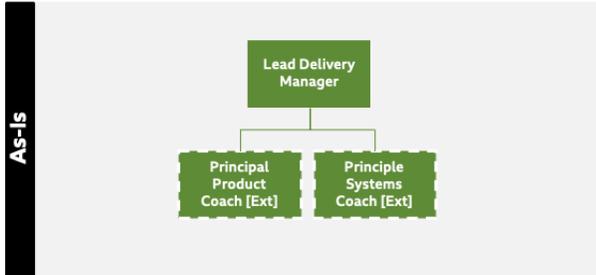

Proposed Portfolio Operations model

Overview

- One **Lead Operations Manager (Portfolio Operations)**
- Four **Principal Operations Managers** (Band E)
- No Senior Operations Manager layer
- No line management for Principals

This preserves overall headcount while materially increasing clarity, accountability, and system ownership.

PRODUCT GROUP OPERATIONS DESIGN
PORTFOLIO OPERATIONS

Band E	Band D	Band C

As-Is

Lead Delivery Manager

- Principal Product Coach [Ext]
- Principle Systems Coach [Ext]

Counter Proposal

Lead Operations Manager

- Principal Operations Manager
- Principal Operations Manager
- Principal Operations Manager
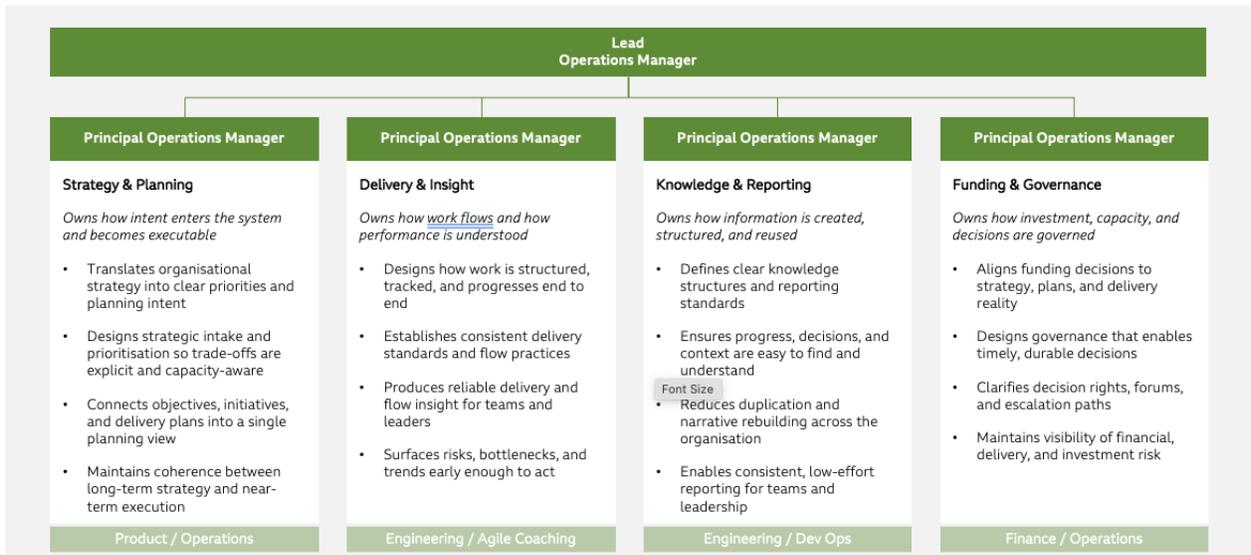- Principal Operations Manager

Benefits

- **Clear ownership from end to end:** One Lead owns Portfolio Operations as a whole, instead of responsibility being split across multiple roles.
- **Less coordination, fewer bottlenecks:** The system no longer relies on senior people stitching things together or managing hand-offs between roles.
- **More done with fewer, more senior people:** A small, highly capable team can take on complex work directly, without needing layers of line management to coordinate them.
- **Scales without adding management layers:** The model grows by improving clarity and ways of working, not by adding more people to manage complexity.

As-Proposed

Lead Operations Manager
- Senior Operations Manager

Lead Operations Manager
- Senior Operations Manager
- Senior Operations Manager

B B C PRODUCT GROUP

Band E	+3	Band D	-3	Band C	-

Portfolio Operations - Counter Proposal

PRODUCT GROUP OPERATIONS DESIGN
PORTFOLIO OPERATIONS – CAPABILITY MODEL

Band E	Band D	Band C

Lead Operations Manager

Principal Operations Manager	Principal Operations Manager	Principal Operations Manager	Principal Operations Manager
Strategy & Planning	**Delivery & Insight**	**Knowledge & Reporting**	**Funding & Governance**
Owns how intent enters the system and becomes executable	*Owns how work flows and how performance is understood*	*Owns how information is created, structured, and reused*	*Owns how investment, capacity, and decisions are governed*
• Translates organisational strategy into clear priorities and planning intent	• Designs how work is structured, tracked, and progresses end to end	• Defines clear knowledge structures and reporting standards	• Aligns funding decisions to strategy, plans, and delivery reality
• Designs strategic intake and prioritisation so trade-offs are explicit and capacity-aware	• Establishes consistent delivery standards and flow practices	• Ensures progress, decisions, and context are easy to find and understand	• Designs governance that enables timely, durable decisions
• Connects objectives, initiatives, and delivery plans into a single planning view	• Produces reliable delivery and flow insight for teams and leaders	Font Size • Reduces duplication and narrative rebuilding across the organisation	• Clarifies decision rights, forums, and escalation paths
• Maintains coherence between long-term strategy and near-term execution	• Surfaces risks, bottlenecks, and trends early enough to act	• Enables consistent, low-effort reporting for teams and leadership	• Maintains visibility of financial, delivery, and investment risk
Product / Operations	Engineering / Agile Coaching	Engineering / Dev Ops	Finance / Operations

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Lead Operations Manager – Portfolio Operations

Owns Portfolio Operations as a coherent system and is accountable for:

- Joining up planning, execution, insight, funding, and governance
- Setting standards and priorities

- Acting as the primary escalation and decision-maker below the Head of Product Operations

> *This role deliberately absorbs integration responsibility to protect the Head role from operational dependency.*

Principal Operations Managers – vertical ownership

Each Principal owns a clearly defined vertical, end-to-end:

- **Delivery & Insight:** Owns work flow, delivery standards, and portfolio insight (e.g. Jira, analytics, flow metrics).
- **Knowledge & Reporting:** Owns how knowledge, context, and reporting are created, structured, and reused.
- **Strategy & Planning:** Owns how intent enters the system and becomes credible, capacity-aware plans.
- **Funding & Governance:** Owns alignment of investment, capacity, and decision-making with strategy and delivery reality.

Third-Party Engagement

Third-Party Engagement – risks in the proposed design

The proposed model introduces material risks to the outcomes Third-Party Operations is increasingly expected to deliver.

Key Risks

Risk	Description	Status
3PE Risk 1: Unclear accountability and mandate for Third-Party Management	Without a clear articulation of outcomes, authority, and interfaces with Engineering, Procurement, Finance, and Legal, Third-Party Management risks being expected to improve supplier performance, value, and risk outcomes without the mandate or leverage to do so. This leads to ambiguity in ownership, inconsistent	**Partially mitigated** — clarified through defined capabilities, separation of responsibilities, and explicit interfaces, but

		expectations, and difficulty operating effectively at scale.	dependent on adoption and reinforcement.
3PE Risk 2: Strategic capability eroded by operational load	Where strategic supplier and commercial management is combined with high-volume operational administration, senior capacity is consumed by throughput. This deprioritises proactive management of supplier performance, value, and risk, anchoring the function in reactive administration rather than strategic oversight.	**Mitigated (by design)** — addressed through explicit separation of strategic third-party management and third-party service & business administration.	
3PE Risk 3: Reactive supplier management and late risk discovery	When strategic capacity is constrained or spread too thinly across a fragmented supplier ecosystem, supplier performance, commercial, and dependency risks are surfaced late. This reduces options, increases cost, and weakens resilience across delivery.	**Partially mitigated** — improved through protected strategic capacity and clearer governance, but remains sensitive to supplier span and ecosystem growth.	
3PE Risk 4: Accumulation of supplier ecosystem complexity over time	In the absence of protected time and authority to step back from day-to-day pressures, the supplier landscape tends to grow organically. Fragmentation increases management overhead,	**Partially mitigated** — the model creates the conditions to address	

	cost, and risk, making it harder to improve value or resilience over time.	complexity, but simplification and consolidation require sustained focus and organisational intent.
3PE Risk 5: Insight without authority to act	Even with strong governance and insight, Third-Party Management may lack the authority or backing to trigger timely decisions, remediation, or trade-offs. This results in known risks persisting, issues escalating late, and confidence in the system eroding over time.	<mark>**Partially mitigated**</mark> — improved through clearer mandate and escalation paths, but dependent on senior sponsorship and decision discipline.

Third-Party Engagement – design principles

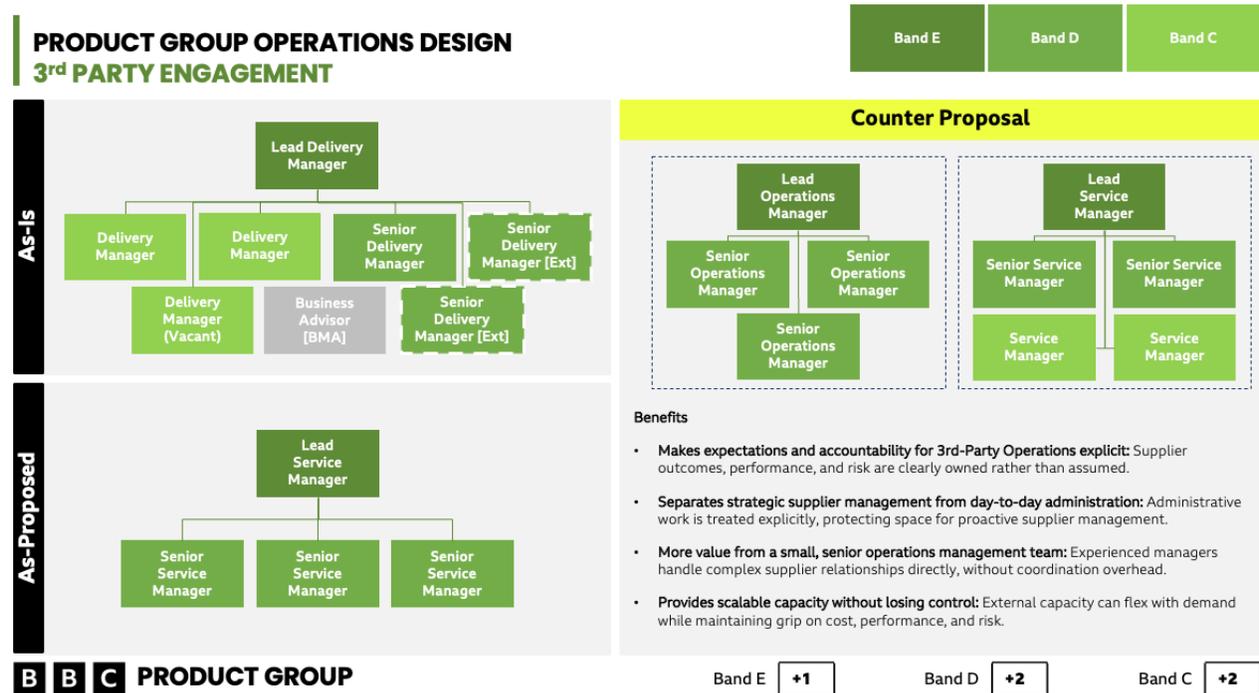The counter-proposal is guided by four principles:

1. **Capability-led design before structure**
2. **Explicit separation of strategic and operational work**
3. **Clear interfaces with Engineering, Procurement, Finance, and Legal**
4. **Scalability through systems and clarity, not heroics**

Proposed Third-Party Engagement model

Overview

- Two complementary capability areas:
  - **3rd-Party Advisory & Governance**
  - **3rd-Party Business Operations**

- Each area has a **Lead Operations Manager**
- Explicit separation of strategic judgement from high-volume operational execution
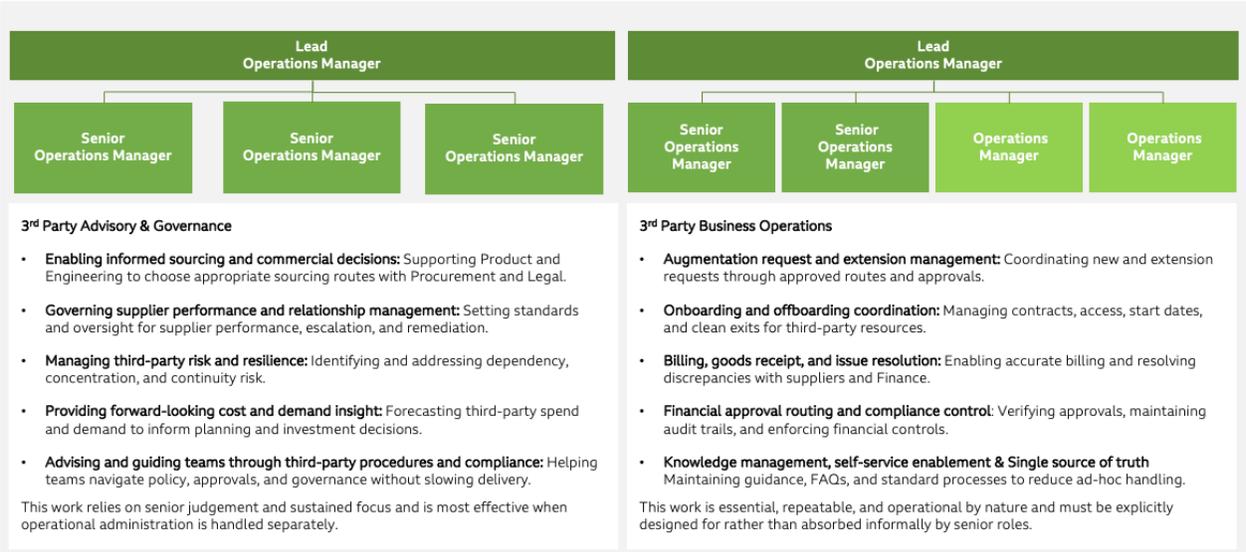- Clear interfaces with Engineering, Procurement, Finance, and Legal

Third Party Engagement - Counter Proposal

Lead Operations Manager

| Senior Operations Manager | Senior Operations Manager | Senior Operations Manager |

Lead Operations Manager

| Senior Operations Manager | Senior Operations Manager | Operations Manager | Operations Manager |

3rd Party Advisory & Governance

- **Enabling informed sourcing and commercial decisions:** Supporting Product and Engineering to choose appropriate sourcing routes with Procurement and Legal.

- **Governing supplier performance and relationship management:** Setting standards and oversight for supplier performance, escalation, and remediation.

- **Managing third-party risk and resilience:** Identifying and addressing dependency, concentration, and continuity risk.

- **Providing forward-looking cost and demand insight:** Forecasting third-party spend and demand to inform planning and investment decisions.

- **Advising and guiding teams through third-party procedures and compliance:** Helping teams navigate policy, approvals, and governance without slowing delivery.

This work relies on senior judgement and sustained focus and is most effective when operational administration is handled separately.

3rd Party Business Operations

- **Augmentation request and extension management:** Coordinating new and extension requests through approved routes and approvals.

- **Onboarding and offboarding coordination:** Managing contracts, access, start dates, and clean exits for third-party resources.

- **Billing, goods receipt, and issue resolution:** Enabling accurate billing and resolving discrepancies with suppliers and Finance.

- **Financial approval routing and compliance control:** Verifying approvals, maintaining audit trails, and enforcing financial controls.

- **Knowledge management, self-service enablement & Single source of truth** Maintaining guidance, FAQs, and standard processes to reduce ad-hoc handling.

This work is essential, repeatable, and operational by nature and must be explicitly designed for rather than absorbed informally by senior roles.

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> *This preserves strategic capacity while enabling Third-Party Operations to scale reliably with increasing supplier dependency and complexity, maintaining grip on value, cost, performance, and risk.*

3rd-Party Advisory & Governance

Strategic, enabling, judgement-led

This capability enables Product and Engineering to make **sound, joined-up decisions** about third-party use, while maintaining organisational grip on value, cost, performance, and risk.

Capability	Description	Examples
Sourcing & commercial enablement	Enable informed sourcing and commercial decisions by translating product priorities and delivery risk into appropriate sourcing routes and commercial	Advising whether a need should be met through augmentation vs outcome-based delivery; recommending use of an existing framework rather than introducing a new supplier; supporting teams to

		models, in partnership with Procurement and Legal.	select an appropriate commercial model (e.g. T&M vs fixed price).
Supplier performance & relationship governance	Provide oversight and standards for how supplier performance and relationships are managed across the organisation.		Defining expectations for supplier performance reviews; leading escalation and remediation where issues span multiple teams; acting as a single point of accountability for systemic supplier concerns.
Third-party risk & resilience management	Identify and manage dependency, concentration, continuity, and delivery risk arising from third-party use.		Highlighting over-reliance on a single supplier or specialist skillset; surfacing concentration risk where multiple critical initiatives depend on the same supplier; advising on mitigation or contingency options.
Cost, demand & financial insight	Provide forward-looking insight into third-party spend and demand to inform planning and investment decisions.		Forecasting third-party cost based on delivery plans; identifying emerging cost pressure from overlapping supplier engagements; supporting trade-off discussions between internal hiring and external spend.
Governance & compliance enablement	Help teams navigate third-party policy, approvals, and governance without unnecessary friction or delay.		Advising on required approvals and decision forums; clarifying governance expectations early to avoid late rework; reducing delivery slow-downs caused by unclear compliance requirements.

> *This work relies on senior judgement, organisational leverage, and sustained focus, and is most effective when protected from high-volume operational activity.*

3rd-Party Business Operations

Operational, repeatable, execution-focused

This capability provides the **day-to-day operational execution** that allows third-party engagement to function reliably and compliantly at scale.

Capability	Description	Examples
Augmentation request & extension coordination	Coordinate new and extension requests through approved sourcing routes and approval pathways.	Processing new supplier requests; coordinating extensions before contracts expire; ensuring rates and approvals are in place before engagement begins.
Onboarding & offboarding coordination	Manage the administrative steps required to onboard and offboard third-party resources efficiently and compliantly.	Coordinating contracts, start dates, and access; ensuring leavers are offboarded cleanly; resolving onboarding issues that block delivery.
Billing and payment enablement	Support accurate billing and timely resolution of discrepancies with suppliers and Finance.	Coordinating goods receipt; resolving invoice or rate discrepancies; liaising with Finance and Business Management Administration to close billing issues.
Financial approval routing & compliance control	Ensure financial approvals and audit requirements are met consistently.	Verifying budget and investment approvals; maintaining audit trails; enforcing agreed financial controls for extensions or changes.
Process, tooling & operational reporting	Operate standard processes, workflows, tooling, and reporting for third-party engagement.	Maintaining request workflows; tracking volumes and cycle times; reporting bottlenecks or delays in onboarding and extensions.
Knowledge management	Reduce ad-hoc handling by maintaining clear	Publishing FAQs and guidance; updating documentation as

& self-service enablement	guidance and self-service resources.	processes change; enabling teams to self-serve common requests.
Single source of truth for third-party insight & reporting	Own the authoritative data, metrics, and reporting for third-party engagement, ensuring insight is consistent, reliable, and decision-ready across Product Group.	Maintaining validated datasets for supplier volumes, cost, demand, cycle times, and performance; producing standard reports for leaders; resolving data discrepancies between Finance, Procurement, and delivery systems.

> *This work is **essential, repeatable, and operational by nature** and must be explicitly designed for rather than absorbed informally by senior roles.*

Why this split matters

Separating Advisory & Governance from Business Operations ensures that **strategic judgement is not consumed by operational throughput**, while still providing the reliable execution required to support delivery at scale. Both capabilities are essential; neither is effective when forced to absorb the responsibilities of the other.

Risk of removing embedded delivery

The decision of the proposal to remove embedded delivery support, creates these system level risks to the goals of thi5 team.

Risk title	Description	Mitigation status
Loss of integration between strategy, planning, and execution	Removing embedded delivery support eliminates the local role that translates intent into credible plans and surfaces execution reality early, increasing drift and late escalation.	Unmitigated — no equivalent system-level mechanism currently absorbs this integration work.
Increased	Essential planning, dependency	Unmitigated —

reliance on informal coordination and senior intervention	management, and issue resolution shift to ad-hoc effort and senior roles, reducing predictability and eroding strategic capacity.	coordination gaps are filled informally rather than through deliberate system design.
Weaker and slower delivery signals into portfolio and governance	Delivery risk, progress, and trade-offs are surfaced later and less consistently, limiting decision quality and reducing confidence in portfolio and governance processes.	<mark>Unmitigated</mark> — insight quality and timeliness degrade without clear local accountability for signal generation.

Closing note

With reduced embedded delivery and support roles, both Portfolio Operations and Third-Party Engagement must now deliver far greater clarity, consistency, and leverage **through the system itself**.

This counter-proposal is designed to:
- Remove fragmented ownership
- Protect strategic capacity
- Make expectations explicit
- Enable sustainable, scalable operation as dependency and complexity continue to grow