PMO SIG March 8, 2011 Meeting Summary

Main Topic: What the PMO Can Do for Soft Skill Development

Leading by example

- Leadership on the Team level
- One-on-one leadership (as needed), separate from Team (when appropriate)

Sponsoring Training Programs

- Specific soft skills or team building (e.g. MBTI)
- HR sponsored training can balance "heavy handed" PMOs

Listening

- More can be learned from listening than from talking.
- We have 2 ears and only 1 mouth – Listen!

Supporting Communication

- Encourage separate sub-teams to cross-communicate, e.g. Business Team and Technical Team sharing their challenges on the same project
- Encourage face-to-face communication. People tend to 'hide' behind the technology of email and voice mail
- Apply a 'Rule of Three' – Once 3 emails have exchanged on the same issue, encourage a discussion
- 'Elephant in the Room' – Openly discuss these from the start; everyone knows it is there. e.g. Client keeps changing requirements – discuss the matter openly
- Effective confrontation is a needed and difficult skill. Key is to address process issues, not personal or emotional aspects. Constructive, not passive-aggressive.

Share stakeholder/contributor responsibility

- Know responsibilities of each stakeholder or contributor. Encourage them to share openly what they do.
- Useful for mentoring junior team members, allowing them to know what's going on and participate more broadly
- Useful for filling gaps and vacancies in the project

Respect and recognition

- Respect for individuals versus titles. Leaders need to acknowledge that respect is earned, authority is appointed.
- Balance the need to press for deliverables with recognition and appreciation for the work and effort of people.
- Sharing 'upward feedback' – delicately. Some leaders need and appreciate this. Key is to raise awareness, offer advice, show confidence.
- Recognize that People Development is a key deliverable to the organization, aside from the deliverables of the project(s).

Time management is an essential soft skill

- Ending meetings on time shows respect for the time and other responsibilities of the project team.
- Setting this example sets the expectation that team members should likewise manage their time, e.g. show up on time for meetings.

Levity helps

- Applying a lighter twist helps take the ugliness out of some issues, and opens communication and observation. e.g. "What did we learn today?", with responses making light of difficulties, but still honing in on the essence of the issues.

Future Topics to Consider

1. PMO Best Practices to support learning and process improvement within project teams
2. Coordination to roll out Agile in your organization
3. Defining the Role of the PMO
4. Looking at the PMO from the Outside
5. Supporting Organizational Decisions
6. PMO Governance and Portfolios
7. Handling PMO Opponents
8. PMO Resources - Templates, Websites, etc.
9. Client Cultures
10. The PMO and Cross Organizational Matrix Management
11. Model PMO Job Descriptions (Maude Fribourg has sample, find others)

Attending: Daniel Walsh, David Kabat, David Morgen, Dorothy Cunha, Jason Fox, Louis Kural, Maude Fribourg, Mayra Rodriguez, Marlo Moss, Paul O'Connor, Paula Storonsky

March 8, 2011
7:45 – 8:45 PM

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