

PMO Community of Practice November 2021 Meeting Summary

Title: Building Excitement: Sustaining the PMO

Brief description: Sustaining the PMO and building excitement with PMs

Learning objectives: Many PMOs fail after a few years. This session will explore how we can sustain the PMO and build excitement with PMs

PDU Amount: 1 PDU

PDU Allocation: Strategic

Member Discussion Topic 11/09/2021: Building Excitement: Sustaining the PMO

- 1) Background: life expectancy of a PMO is short – depending on who you ask, around 2-3 years. PMO Challenges (from [Why PMOs Fail](#))
 - a) Organizational resistance to change
 - b) Poor definition and communication of PMO goals
 - c) Lack of full senior management support, ex, PMO brought in to solve a specific problem and then lose interest when the immediate pain is relieved
 - i) Example: Remediate audit findings
- 2) PM perceptions - I'm from the PMO and I'm here to help?
 - a) Bureaucratic, red tape, time-wasting, obstacle to project success
 - b) New processes that take time but do not add value
 - i) Example: one size fits all processes that make it easier for the PMO to process, but add overhead on PMs that does not help the project succeed.
 - c) Too removed from the actual projects and product owners to know what's really going on.
 - i) Ivory tower issues
 - ii) Promoting PMs that are "available" for the PMO instead of taking expert leaders to help raise the overall quality of project management
 - iii) As Peter Drucker put it, "Most of what we call management consists of making it difficult for people to get their work done."
- 3) What do PMs want
 - a) Organizing, Being Creative, Leading teams
 - b) Variety and learning something new all the time
 - c) Leading a team to do amazing things
 - d) Working with new people
 - e) Delivering something meaningful to you – ex: heal the sick, feed the hungry, house the homeless, provide for people's financial security, educate people about the world
 - f) On the dark side, some PMs want to do their work without oversight
- 4) How can the PMO help – especially if you were hired by the CFO /CEO to solve a specific pain point
 - a) Scheduler support can help free up PMs to do their job while providing transparency into the project status.
 - i) Scheduler can identify problems quickly for effective decisions, including fixes, rescheduling, alternative approaches, and even cancelling a project that is no longer viable
 - b) Worthwhile projects from the portfolio – assignments based on value, allowing people to work with different teams

- i) Noise management vs value management, for example building one bridge instead of starting to build 4 bridges. The 4 part-bridges satisfy 4 stakeholders that we are working to help them, but adds less value (or no value) compared to building one complete bridge and having the other 3 on the roadmap.
- c) Streamlined standards and guidelines that help deliver the project, while keeping it as simple as possible (KISS)
- d) Tools and supportive teams (ex: administrative support to allow the PM to drive delivery)
- e) Support from other PMs – shared expertise and problem solving, comradery
- 5) How can this fit in with the needs of the CFO/CEO?
 - a) Phasing in PM needs while removing CFO/CEO stress
 - b) PMO can fill different roles based on need, such as control for the C-level and support for the PMs.
 - c) PMO can provide auxiliary support so PM can focus on driving the project. For example:
 - i) additional resources such as support staff to help with scheduling, legal contracts and other activities
 - ii) budget for tools that the PM can use
 - d) Portfolio support for planning new project staffing as old projects finish
 - e) Ripple effect of missing deadline
 - f) Shifting decisions to the owner of the budget who need to understand the ripple effect of schedule slippage and make the hard decisions when they will be most effective
 - g) Clear value metrics - benchmark and measure PMO value over time
 - h) Executive needs (fix the pain, clean the mess, governance and control) and project team needs (focus on project delivery vs bureaucracy, great projects to work on)

References:

- [11 Reasons To Love Being A Project Manager](#)
- [10 Things I Love About Managing Projects](#)
- [Why PMOs Fail](#)
- [Five Major Challenges of PMO Implementation in 2019](#)
- [Lazar, O. \(2011\). Ensure PMO's sustainability: make it temporary! Paper presented at PMI® Global Congress 2011—North America, Dallas, TX. Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute.](#)
- [Kill the PMO! Resurrect the department of simplicity](#)
- [Principles behind the Agile Manifesto](#)

Next Meeting:

Next meeting is Tuesday, Dec 14, 2021

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