

## **PMO SIG December 2013 Meeting Summary**

### **Discussion Topic: December Trends for PMOs**

#### **People taking time off**

- December holidays are popular for time off
  - Project team members
  - Customers
  - Sponsors, other stakeholders
- People also have “use it or lose it” time off (cannot carry to next year)

#### **Planning for time off**

- Set expectations for time off and coverage needs in December
  - Any constraints on how many from team can be off concurrently
  - Any constraints on certain team members (e.g. based on skill needs in December)
- Request plans/schedules for project team time off early, e.g. September
  - Get an early idea on what people have in mind
  - Allows time for people to make alternate plans if necessary (e.g. use time off in November instead of December)
- May need to decline some time off requests
  - Balance between fairness and business/project needs

#### **Customer position and expectations for December**

- Customer may have year-end deadlines, critical needs
- December may typically be slow and relaxed month for customer
- December may be an intense time for customer (e.g. retail, travel)
- Need to plan staffing and time off according to customer’s needs

#### **December freeze**

- Some organizations go into a ‘change freeze’ mode around year-end
- Change freeze can drop workload and make time off easier and more flexible

#### **Project planning around December trends**

- Plan for ‘normal’ project progress up to Thanksgiving
- Plan for minimal project progress in December (if appropriate)
- Plan for ‘mad rush’ to resume work in January

#### **Planning around absent stakeholders**

- Can be harder to get things approved
  - Have approvals scheduled before approvers not available
  - Have deputy approvers
- Escalations may be difficult – need alternate plans to handle escalations

### **Quiet time advantages**

- If project activity slows down, December can be a quiet time
- Quiet time allows
  - Chance to 'catch breath'
  - Reflection on project and team
  - Planning for next year

### **Holiday or year-end parties**

- Company parties often scheduled in December, may impact work schedules
  - May need to consider next day schedule, perhaps plan for later start (no early meetings)
- There is usually more food around the office in December
  - Vendors, customers, etc. may send food
  - Employees/contractors often bring in food to share
  - Food is a good motivator, reason to mingle and socialize

### **Cultural, religious and international differences**

- Need to consider cultural differences for international projects, and/or project teams comprising multiple nationalities or cultures
- Not everyone observes same holidays, or treats holiday time the same
  - Some countries allow much more time off, more respectful of holiday time
- Cultural or religious diversity may provide opportunity for staffing backups (backup by team members not celebrating a holiday)
- Takeover of an organization by a different culture can cause changes in how December time off is treated (better or worse)

### **Happy holidays!**

- Happy holidays to all PMO SIG participants. We'll meet again in 2014.

### **Next Meeting**

Next meeting is in January. Topic: TBD

### **PMO SIG Discussion Topics to Consider**

1. PMO Practice
  - a. PMO Resources - Templates, Websites, etc.
  - √ b. PMO Best Practices to support learning and process improvement within project teams
  - √ c. Coordination to roll out Agile in your organization
  - d. PMO Governance and Portfolios
2. PMO Promotion
  - a. Looking at the PMO from the Outside
  - b. PMO Promotion in the Academic World
  - c. Promoting the value of the PMO
  - d. Explaining the benefits of the PMO

3. Organizing and Starting the PMO
  - a. Defining the Role of the PMO
  - b. Supporting Organizational Decisions
  - c. The PMO and Cross Organizational Matrix Management
  - d. Lifecycle of a PMO, how to start one and pitfalls at different stages of the lifecycle
  - e. Where should the PMO be migrated into with a company that re-organizes, downsizes?
  - f. Criteria to establish a PMO in your organization - When does it NOT make sense to have a PMO?
  - √ g. Should the PMO be in-sourced or out-sourced? Why?
  
4. Other
  - a. PMO Practices vs. Upper Management
  - b. Client Cultures
  - c. Model PMO Job Descriptions (Maude Fribourg has sample, find others)
  - d. Keeping PMOs Active
  - e. PMO – Current and Future
  - √ f. Working with a Multi-generational Workforce
  - √ g. PMO Myths
  
- ★ In progress
- √ Completed

Attending: Belinda Primus, Dorothy Cunha, Felicia Ricketts, Jason Fox, Louis Kural,  
Mayra Rodriguez, Ray Francis

December 10, 2013  
8:15 – 9:15 PM

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