Discussion Topic: Certification vs. Practice

Raju Rao presented "Certification or Practice: A Paradigm Shift Will Help" to the chapter at this meeting, which sparked a continued discussion of the topic in our PMO SIG.

Is PMP certification the right focus, or do PMOs have more need for skills acquired from practice?

Tech Lead model for Offshore Project Team
- Projects utilizing offshore team have a "Tech Lead" onshore
- Offshore provider can pull together a team, but key skills needed may be missing, even with team member certifications
- Onshore Tech Lead compensates for any skill weaknesses offshore
- Limited number of Tech Leads limits project capacity

Recruiting
- Non-technical interviewer usually measurers skills by certifications, résumé
- Best to find out how candidate dealt with impossible situations, failures, etc. to assess how the candidate handles and performs under circumstances that certifications don't address

PMBOK provisions and limitations
- PMBOK does:
  - Help describe how things are to be done
  - Help identify skills needed
  - Assume resources are available
- PMBOK does not:
  - Help dealing with politics
  - Help dealing with incompetence
  - Help dealing with adversity

Reputation of PMP Certification
- PMP is a minimum requirement
  - Highly marketed certification
  - Often a required skill in job descriptions
- Consulting companies seeking project opportunities with external customers
  - Must have certified PMPs to market to their customers
- Organizations often protect themselves by seeking PMPs for their projects
  - Assurance that project will succeed with PMP

PMO Needs for PMPs

- PMO needs PMPs to build the structure (standards and practices)
- Project Managers should follow the PMO structure
  · PMP certification of Project Managers not necessary

Complexity factors

- More complex, higher risk projects have more need for professional competence
- "Garden variety" projects can be managed satisfactorily by non-PMP with some basic tools

Circumstances affecting PM/PMP value

- A good PM with PMP certification may have been "thrown under the bus" on a project
  · Negative rating on this PM requires replacement
  · Second PM is not necessarily better than first PM
- Replacement may have been political, reactionary – not reflective of PM or PMP

Mentoring

- Mentoring is preferred way to build the breed of PM specifically needed
- Mentoring can focus on areas beyond PMBOK
  · Politics of internal organization
  · Customer specific needs

"A Team" project saviors

- "A Team" of best resources in organization
  · A Team floats from project to project
  · Save or boost project in trouble for a short time
  · Moves on to next project in need

PMO Size and Scope

- Large PMO can become dysfunctional, detached from specific business needs
- "One size fits all" does not always work
  · Large PMO enforcing same standards across enterprise
  · Needs of specific business areas overlooked in favor of standard

Next Meeting

Next meeting is in May.

Topic suggestion: Focusing on Your Sphere of Control (Changing the things you can)

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: David Morgen, Dorothy Cunha, Jason Fox, Joe Palau, Maude Fribourg,
          Ray Francis, Sanjey Patil

April 8, 2014   Chair: David Morgen, PMP
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