



PMO SIG May 2015 Meeting Summary

Discussion Topic: PM Toolbox 2

Discussion continued from last PMO SIG meeting, Collected notes & Follow ups

- PM Toolbox notes from April meeting (repeated in next section)
- David Morgen follow-ups for continued discussion
 - ♦ Notes from PM job descriptions found online (below)
 - ♦ Inquiry to PMI Leadership
 - ♦ Feedback from PMO SIG (below)

From April Meeting – PM Toolbox

- How many do you need to know – versus one
 - ♦ Which ones are important to know
 - ♦ Portfolio, Project Management (Clarity, MS PPM)
- Depth of use
 - ♦ Does one skim the surface?
 - ♦ Mix tools for “best of breed” features?
- What are the tools best suited for a PM job search
 - ♦ Scrum / Agile – software
 - ♦ MS Office
 - ♦ Specific tools depend on specific job requirements
 - ♦ If you list too many tools you “eliminate the superstar”
- What is the extent of “specialty tools”
- ITIL vs 6Sigma
 - ♦ 6Sigma – repetitive operations, baselines, etc.
 - ♦ ITIL – costs to activities, process

Some initial impressions from searching Monster

- Project Management Requirements
 - ♦ Project Management experience – typically 5-10 years or more
 - ♦ Domain and Functional knowledge (ex: Construction, Software, Medical, Finance, Legal, Media, Engineering, Marketing, Consumer Goods, Supply Chain, CRM systems) – typically 3-5 years. Sometimes they get very specific, such as years of experience with salesforce.com, EPIC, Food Services or specific financial modelling software or SDLC processes/tools
 - ♦ Management of teams (non-matrix) of at least 5 people
 - ♦ Management of Matrix teams
 - ♦ Project Size – at least \$1M to \$5M. Typically with budget responsibility (ex: you managed the budget)
 - ♦ MS Office, MS Project (sometimes clarity or MSP Server/Enterprise)
 - ♦ PMP
 - ♦ BA Skills (ex: business case definition, gathering requirements)
 - ♦ BS or MS degree in appropriate field, such as engineering, MIS, MBA, Computer Science, Food Science, etc.
 - ♦ Experience with Agile (CSM) on about 15% of the PM positions. Less often Six Sigma (about 3%) and ITIL was about 1%.



- ◆ Travel is typically 10-50%. Relocation for contracting positions was mentioned fairly often – my guess is that they are having a hard time filling these.
- ◆ Sometimes technical skills in domain, such as SQL, .net, Java, HTML, HTML5, etc.
- ◆ Type of development, such as mobile, e-commerce or infrastructure
- Agile PM skills
 - ◆ Experience as ScrumMaster, sometimes also want PO experience
 - ◆ CSM
 - ◆ Experience with Agile PM Software (On Monster, for an Agile PM, JIRA was mentioned 15%, Rally 12%, Version One 3%)
- PMO skills
 - ◆ Governance experience, including various governance reports
 - ◆ Experience working in a PMO (typically 3-5 years depending on position)

Feedback from PMO SIG (via email)

- Should we focus on these instead of a laundry list of tools?
 - ◆ Successful delivery of projects delivering value to company
 - ◆ Honesty/Integrity
 - ◆ How measured or demonstrated?
- Metrics
 - ◆ Number of years in project management implies the likelihood that you can demonstrate capability with different types of projects
 - ◆ History of successful project delivery is listed as a requirement and normally discussed in a situational interview
 - ◆ Project size metrics, such as budget, number of people, matrix experience and working with vendors is an indicator of the ability to handle complexity
- Credentials - may reduce the ramp up but is it critical or just nice to have?
 - ◆ Certifications and degrees
 - ◆ Tools that can be picked up on the job fairly quickly such as PPM tools
 - ◆ Soft skills: Communicator, Leadership skills
 - ◆ Process experience with SDLC, Kanban, Scrum, RUP
 - ◆ Technical skills outside of PM work itself. For instance, JAVA, .net, SQL
- Domain - may reduce the ramp up but is it critical or just nice to have?
 - ◆ Industry/Functional experience. Famously, Steve Jobs was hugely successful in Technology and Entertainment
- Other
 - ◆ Travel/Relocation willingness shows whether there is a good fit when the job requires moving around
 - ◆ Knowledge of MS Office or MS Project



Toolbox Skills vs. Project Success

- Are the Toolbox Skills worthy of focus?
 - ♦ Job descriptions often list the skills/tools
 - ♦ Job application systems may be looking for specific skill/tool keywords
 - ♦ Applicants need to list the skills/tools on resume to pass the keyword screen
- How is project management success assessed?
 - ♦ Accomplishments shown in resume
 - ♦ In interview, “Tell me about a time when...” questions
 - ...you had a project in jeopardy
 - ...you needed to deal with a difficult sponsor/customer/team member
 - ...etc.

Recruiter interview strategies regarding tools

- HR Recruiter, Phone screen interview
 - ♦ HR screen often looking for specific checklist items, often including tool skills
 - ♦ HR screen also assesses professionalism, eloquence, confidence
- Bypassing recruiter focus on specific tool skills, when skill expertise is lacking
 - ♦ Need to keep interview alive, prove capabilities beyond the specific skill
 - ♦ Compare to similar experience you have
 - ♦ Cite work experience where a skill was learned on demand
 - ♦ Show confidence in meeting challenges
 - ♦ Demonstrate learning ability
 - ♦ Address other equally important skills/requirements you bring
- Assume recruiter does not understand all details of the position, such as technical skills
 - ♦ Opportunity to explain how your qualifications might be equal (or better)

Certifications and credentials

- Certifications are the new norm, expected (college degree alone does not cut it)
- Job descriptions often cite certifications required, or desired (plus)
- Certification obtained by passing exam, not the same as experience or skill
 - ♦ Crash courses for certifications
 - Intentional focus on passing exam after 3-5 days of training
 - ♦ Skilled test-taker may have advantage to pass the exam
 - Keen ability to choose right answer from multiple choice
 - ♦ Not necessarily grasping all the content, but able to pass the exam
- Having many certifications not always a plus
 - ♦ Too many can lead to no depth of skill in any area
 - ♦ Difficult to maintain and renew certifications

Domain knowledge vs. Tool skills

- Knowledge of business domain often an equally important requirement to tool skills
- Staying within a specific domain (or similar domains)
 - ♦ You have the skills sought, need to keep up on the latest trends/developments
- Shifting to a new domain
 - ♦ Need to overcome lack of domain experience
 - Focus on transferrable skills and similarities
 - Show any past experience picking up new domains
 - ♦ Some domains difficult to bridge, employer wants experience in the domain
 - Healthcare jobs often strongly prefer healthcare experience



Strategies for job seeking

- Resume
 - ♦ Needs to list skills for applicant system keyword matching, HR checklists, etc.
 - ♦ Should show accomplishments that demonstrate skill, ability, results, value
- Recruiter screening
 - ♦ Need to eke out the checklist skills, respond positively where possible
 - ♦ Do your best to assuage missing/weak skills and demonstrate ability to compensate with similar experience, learning ability, etc.
- Interview with hiring manager
 - ♦ Manager may be looking for a specific skill to fill a gap on team
 - ♦ Important to demonstrate growth ability
 - Take on new challenges
 - Build skills
 - Achieve higher levels to grow into higher positions
- Networking
 - ♦ Networking does not get a job, but opens doors
 - ♦ Often more powerful than a long list of tools, skills, certifications
 - ♦ Referrals usually bypass barriers, such as HR screening

Next Meeting

Next meeting is in June.

PMO SIG Discussion Topics to Consider

Proposed Topics (items in bold are recent suggestions)

1. PMO Practice
 - a. **Types of Charters**
 - b. **Using BAs in PMO Models**
 - c. PMO Resources - Templates, Websites, etc.
 - d. PMO Governance and Portfolios
2. PMO Promotion
 - a. Looking at the PMO from the Outside
 - 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
 - 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. Sphere of control vs outside your control - knowing the difference
 - b. Internal Audit Projects**
 - c. Enforcing Results Offshore**
 - d. Thanksgiving Project Management (Nov 2014 meeting)
 - e. Model PMO Job Descriptions (Maude Fribourg has sample, find others)
 - f. Several 15-minute talks on PMO topics of interest**

Attending: Belinda Primus, Charles R. Cante, Daniel Walsh, David Morgen, Elizabeth Novak, Gabi Kladni, Jaime Lieber, Jason Fox, John Sandfort, Mo Haryn, Monique DiSalvo, Sanjey Patil

May 12, 2015
8:15 – 9:15 PM

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