PMO Community of Practice March 2021 Meeting Summary

Header (Required)

Title: Growing the business with PMO Consultants
Brief description: How the PMO can use Consultants to help organizations grow
Learning objectives: Learning how to use consultants to help organizations grow
PDU Amount 1   1 PDU
PDU Allocation 1   Strategic

Member Discussion Topic 3/9/2021: Growing the business with PMO Consultants

1) Types of Consultants
    a) Staff augmentation
        i) Handling all of a part of the work
        ii) Seeing many things, gets a broad range of experience
        iii) Frequently comes into projects in trouble - wears a firefighter's hat
    b) Consulting firms performing projects
        i) Bigger firms handling larger projects
        ii) Interesting – all the components, all the people
        iii) Your bringing the expertise of product or process that they don't have – ex: delivering an ERP system
        iv) Dynamic, fast pace work
    c) Consulting firms performing operations (ex: help desk)
        i) Herding cats and helping the team control their projects
        ii) Operational and can get boring after a while once you create the process to get it to work
        iii) Transition from consultant to the operational team - morphing to training exercise
2) Challenges
    a) Challenge of fitting in with the team
        i) Need to learn how to work with people already there and bringing them together
        ii) Collaborate - cannot impose specific tools
        iii) As an example, implementing a Kanban was simple thing but made a big difference bringing the team together
        iv) Bringing to fruition with strong personalities
        v) Balancing a fine line
    b) Example: Coming into big project toward the latter end – brought in for a component and did not see the architect
        i) Project had been taking a long time
        ii) They did not build a microservice between UI and database
        iii) Tried to table for a future phase in order to get the MVP out the door
        iv) See component A, but underlying issue is in component B
        v) Putting together a plan / documentation, you can see gaps
    c) Example: Went in with firm that contracted out
        i) Problem that neither wants to address – something wrong with plans, using the wrong information – diverged over distance
        ii) Ends up being change order
3) Consultants vs employees
    a) Advantages of consultants
        i) Consultants have a broad experience across many organizations
        ii) Consultants bring the energy of knowing it will end
        iii) Consultants have the backing of people who brought them in
        iv) Need to earned trust by solving problems quickly
        v) When you work your way out of the job, you get a new job – training your replacement

   vi) Faster hiring process
b) Advantages of employees
   i) Employees have depth of experience in the organization / institutional knowledge
   ii) Employees have more time to build trust and long-term relationships
   iii) As an employee when consultants were brought in for the help desk, could identify a problem because understood the issue in depth
4) Interactions and Engagement on Projects
   i) Selection criteria: Known quantity, Reputation (ex: top-tier firm) , Resume Match, Bake off vs single bidder. Onshore vs offshore vs near shore
   ii) Big firms – long process, lots of interviews
      (1) Consulting firm needed to fill a position – got hired quickly
   iii) Once you went to internal training – they assess your capabilities and place at client quickly. One of the best companies
   iv) Different jobs between teams – you want consistency in team structures as you go from client to client – pod going from place to place. As people grow in pod, spin off to new pod.
      (1) They will make sure you meet the client needs
   v) Need to be careful that the people you are interviewing are the ones you get.
      (1) Interviewing the A team and getting the B team
      (2) What to do when they are not meeting your needs
      (3) Got people switched out, then switched firms
      (4) Takes time and can be costly
   vi) Example
      (1) Implemented SF Marketing cloud, migrated from another MA system
      (2) Hired SF, worked with third party recommended for implementation – based on references
b) Contracts – standard and custom
   i) Leverage the expertise of Contracts Department / Legal
   ii) Leverage PMO Templates for deliverables and services
c) How do these differ between employees, staff augmentation, consulting firms/teams?
   i) At HR consulting firm, involved with RFP, managed from top to bottom. Worked with employer clients to procure benefits plan, Led implementation
   ii) Client had good level of trust – trusted advisor as part of team
   iii) Can take experience as an employee into a startup / vendor
d) End of contract – roll over to new work or release?
   i) Varies widely
      (1) At end of contract, starting to look for next job. Turnover party.
         (a) Top of list for upgrades
      (2) Another group kept rolling into the next group, tuned the process
5) References
   a) Is a Consultant Just Someone Who Takes the Watch Off Your Wrist, and Then Tells You the Time? By ROI
   b) What is a consultant?

Next Meeting
Next meeting is Tuesday, April 13, 2021

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