Building excellence in project management drives performance in your organization

How leading organizations use project management excellence to promote knowledge sharing, innovation, and human capital development

It is not a secret that enterprises all over the world use projects and project management as tools for getting things done both internally and for their customers. But many organizations create even greater value by using project management as a powerful method for:

- Collecting and sharing “lessons learned” with the whole organization
- Contributing to innovation
- Developing internal “best practices”
- Providing experience-based data to identify the topics and areas in which the organization and its people need to be developed

How can project management provide so much more than deadlines and deliverables? One approach is to create an internal project management office (PMO) that manages the projects needed to deliver on the strategy. The PMO supports projects, tracks timing, budget and scope, while keeping an eye on the strategic needs of the organization. It helps select, track, deliver and analyze the effectiveness of a portfolio of projects. The PMO collects and distributes information about successes, best practices and what not to do. And, to facilitate organizational learning, it analyzes data about what went wrong in projects and recommends areas for developing the knowledge and skills of project teams and individuals.

Why would you use a project portfolio approach?

Employing a portfolio management approach is an effective method for ensuring that strategic projects stay on track. Objectives related to the organization’s strategy are translated into projects and managed continuously. They are revisited and revised regularly as conditions in the business or political environment change and as information feeds back from front-line implementation.
Keeping an eye on the strategy

As projects become more complex – across functions, across geographies, involving multiple suppliers or customers – it becomes even more important to ensure you’re your managers’ attention and resources are being invested in the most important strategic projects. Selecting “the right projects” is critical for making your strategy a reality.

Managers need to ensure alignment of projects to strategy. Executive sponsorship is essential to the success of any project in terms of being delivered on budget and on time with the desired results. Too many strategic projects run like underground projects while senior management attention is tied up in high-profile, but less strategic projects.

So PMOs need to be aligned closely with the company’s goals and strategy. Senior management needs to create a clear scope statement to give the PMO a clear mandate in order to build a strategically aligned action plan with meaningful targets and milestones.

Continually manage for quality and to reduce risks

Your people may have the basic skills and fundamental knowledge they need to manage strategic projects. But things can still go wrong. Costs can increase, deadlines can slip, and all of this can have a negative impact on quality.

Delivering On Time and On Budget

The “black hole” regarding cost and time in projects is unacceptable. Managers have to be able to predict costs, timings and make sure that their projects stay on track! There are tools to manage project cost and time, to identify when you are getting off track, and to get back on again.

Managing Quality in Projects

It’s not enough to deliver the project on time and on budget. Results count even more. The project has to deliver exactly to specifications, with a focus on quality. This is especially true for projects you deliver to clients, and even more so now that global competition is increasing. Good enough is not good enough anymore. Whether your company subscribes to ISO standards, or has its own quality criteria, you have to be able to manage projects to deliver on quality levels.

Managing Risk in Projects

Anticipating and project risk and building in safeguards and contingency plans are key skills in major projects. Sponsors and customers don’t want...
any bad surprises. A project plan without a solid risk analysis and mitigation plan is a dangerous way to manage.

**IT projects – essential to strategy implementation**

CIO magazine recently surveyed 500 CIOs for the top skills required from their teams. Project management and process management were at the top of the list. Computer Weekly found that the need for IT project managers is growing faster than the market. Lower-level tasks are frequently outsourced. But the work done inside the company requires more professional project management skills.

**Project management: A central part of every manager’s job**

Routine jobs hardly exist anymore. Routine processes are automated or outsourced.

The real work of managers in every discipline is about managing projects. In practical terms, that means more people need to have the knowledge and skills to manage projects.

In order for companies to implement strategy, they need to ensure that the people on key projects and related sub-projects have professional-level project management skills. This will help to ensure that work is done and goals are accomplished smoothly.

**Working with complexity in project management**

Most managers are expected by their companies to deal with a large number of complex implementation projects. Too often, they are expected to deliver results without a foundation of project management skills and tools to help them achieve it all. Statistics show that many of these managers fail – 84% of all projects are either over budget, delivered late or do not meet specifications.

**Where is project management going?**

As part of its investigation into how it can use the Project Management Academy to drive continuous improvement, NASA began looking at trends in the practice of project management. As of 2012, it had identified 11 trends that are likely to impact projects and their management:

1. Talent management
2. Complexity
3. Project management certification
4. Project academies
5. Team diversity
6. Sustainability
7. Portfolio management
8. Virtual work
9. Transparency
10. Frugal innovation
11. Smart networks

**Project managers need to be good at both technical and people skills**

Professional project management requires technical proficiency in a methodology such as PMBOK® or Prince 2®. It also requires people management skills. Project managers need to be good at both.

**How MCE can help**

MCE develops project management skills in your managers, across the organization, around the world. Individuals may prefer to develop their project management skills in an open enrolment workshop alongside their peers from a wide variety of industries and countries.

We can work with your senior management team to identify a portfolio of strategy implementation projects, and set up a system to manage the projects effectively. And, we can work with you to build and operate a project academy for your organization.

Individual senior managers may wish to plan their project portfolios in an open enrolment workshop, benefiting from exchange with their peers in other industries and countries.

**Contact MCE**

Telephone: +32 (0)2 543 21 20
Email: info@mce-ama.com
Website: www.mce-ama.com