

The Two Step

This short piece presents a concise approach to how prominent organizations can manage the challenge of enterprise-wide project management.

Companies extend substantial resources (people and time) across important initiatives and then never really know what is happening to their investments, so how do they solve this?

The challenge is that organizations typically align their scarce IT resources within separate teams working on different projects, leaving each to roll up their reports. This “roll-up” activity usually consumes additional time by an individual, or group of individuals, consolidating the information and putting into a singular, readable format. Each of these roll-ups may be evaluating and identifying statuses that the project manager or sponsor believes is important (which might be very true) to the initiative. But, does this consolidated report address the corporation’s needs? Does an executive quickly recognize the information and can make decisions? How does an organization address these questions?

The solution is:

Get the organization to accept the concept and structure of a Project Management Office (PMO).

Once this decision is made the company can look internally to assign this responsibility to a resource, or hire a company with PMO experience. If a company opts for the former, this individual should be experienced in not only the benefits of a PMO but must be equally strong in change-management. Otherwise, look for a company with this experience along with familiarity within their industry. Of additional significance will be that an outside company be able to present themselves with an ability to align to the company’s culture.

The next step, whether by the individual or the hired company, will involve rigorous observation and analysis. The objective is to build a uniform platform tailored to meet the organizations needs. Once the platform is constructed, a project dashboard is created. This dashboard will enable management to quickly measure the health of any single project, as well as the cumulative effect to the organization. The most notable items in most dashboards look to address are costs and time. Beyond these an organization can look to benefit from specific key indicators in the areas of budgets, vendors, team skills, scope, etc. With this view, the management team can quickly identify where and why a project might be off target and make necessary adjustments. This new standard within the company can, and should be applied to all projects regardless of size and scope.

The final element to internalize is to remain committed to this new paradigm and this involves change (and people and organizations do not typically embrace change). Thus, the PMO must have the skills and experiences to be and deliver on the role of a change agent.

So, how do companies know what is happening with their investments across projects?

1. Implement a PMO
2. Adopt and commit to this new model

Wasn't that easy?