Is your PMO Delivering on its promise?

5 Critical questions to consider for PMO success

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Project Management Office (PMO) serves as a *"center of excellence"* for delivery of complex, innovative projects by establishing a framework for project governance and delivery including processes, tools and documentation to track, manage and measure projects. Over the years, organizations have embraced the implementation of a PMO to help deliver projects successfully, on time and on budget. As a matter of fact, so prevalent is this across industries that PricewaterhouseCoopers research showed that an astounding **97 % of organizations believe that project management is important to business performance and organization success.**

Although seemingly simple, research shows that the PMO has had tremendous challenges delivering to business expectations:

- According to the Association for Project Management, **"50% of Project Management Offices (PMOs) close within just three years"**,

- while Gartner Project Manager 2014 reported that **"Since 2008, the correlated PMO implementation failure rate is over 50%"** and furthermore,

- that "**68% of stakeholders perceive their PMOs to be bureaucratic".**

Why such a huge gap between PMO performance and business expectations? And more importantly, what can be done to change this?
While much has been written about project execution best practices, much of the success of the PMO lies in how it operates, taking into consideration the organizational dynamics and culture.

There are five critical questions to consider whether or not, operationally, your PMO is set up for success:

1. Do you have a well-articulated mandate/scope for the PMO along with strong Executive Sponsorship? Has it been communicated and socialized with all key stakeholders? Is there buy-in by all stakeholders? Are there any "pockets of resistance" and if so, is there priority placed to dealing with it?

2. Is the PMO's organizational structure and governance well-defined? And is it set up at the right level within the organization to succeed?

3. Is there a well-established governance for establishing priorities and making key strategic decisions?

4. Is there strong, well-respected leadership within the PMO with a track record of successful deliveries?

5. Does the PMO embrace a culture of training, mentoring and coaching of Project Managers to help them succeed?

Answers to the above questions will shed light into some of the reasons why PMOs and their projects may be doomed from the start. The PMO needs to take a leadership role in demonstrating its value to the business, and as statistics show there can be significant consequences for not addressing the operational elements in the right way to help in its success.

Not all is lost however, as more PMO's are maturing, they are finding ways to move closer to delivering on their promise to add and create strategic value for their businesses.

In our next few articles we will continue our discussion on **PMO performance and its optimization, the roadmap to PMO maturity, and key strategies on how to deliver on the PMO promise.**