Overcoming Challenges of Project Management Implementation

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Expectations

1. PMs are only needed for really big projects
2. PMs will fit easily into the existing organizational hierarchy
3. All PMs will deliver projects in exactly the same way
4. PMs will immediately make projects better
Do I need a PM?

There was an assumption that Project Managers are only needed when a request would take lots of time, people, and coordination.
Do I need a PM?

PMs think everything is a project.

I heard you have a new project request.
No, it’s just an enhancement.
No, it’s regular maintenance.
No, it’s just Help Desk ticket.
Do I need a PM?

- We needed to define the term project
- According to Gov’t Code §2054 Projects have
  - well-defined parameters
  - specific objectives
  - common benefits
  - planned activities
  - a scheduled completion date
  - and an established budget
- Most activities could fit this definition
Now that needs a PM

We really needed to determine when a request should follow standard Project Management methods.

• Project Classification Method
• Project Approval Process
You’re not the boss!

It was assumed that Project Managers would fit easily into the organizational hierarchy.
You’re not the boss!

PMs want to direct EVERYTHING about their projects

• Control communication
• Assign tasks
• Run meetings
• Monitor progress
You’re not the boss!

- PM only knows about a small portion of each person’s workload
- The PM does not conduct performance reviews
- The PM does not handle resource issues (hiring/firing/etc.)
- Sometimes, PMs need their boss to be a subject matter expert
PMs have no staff of their own, but they need a team to complete the project.
We’re a team

People have different roles for organizational issues versus project specific issues. Therefore, we defined

• Project Roles and Responsibilities
We’re all different

There was an expectation that PMs would standardize project delivery, but each PM seemed to manage differently.
We’re all different

Each project needs different management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do I need a Business Case?</td>
<td>- Absolutely!</td>
<td>- No, just a memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where’s the schedule?</td>
<td>- MS Project</td>
<td>- Excel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When does the Board meet?</td>
<td>- Every Tuesday</td>
<td>- As needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who writes the requirements?</td>
<td>- Business Analyst</td>
<td>- Proj. Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the Sponsor?</td>
<td>- Deputy Exec. Dir.</td>
<td>- Div. Dir.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Large Project
  - Many Divisions
  - Deadline Driven

- Small Project
  - Single Division
  - Resource Driven
We’re all the same

All PMs balance

• Time
• Cost
• Scope
• Resources
• Quality
We’re all the same

In order to standardize our methodology while still conducting the balancing act, we created

• Project Classification Method
• Documentation Guidelines
• Project Approval Process
Why isn’t it better yet?

There was an expectation that adding PMs would immediately make projects better.
Why isn’t it better yet?

• We needed a common understanding of what it meant to make projects “better”

• We needed “better” to be measurable so we could rate the success of project management
It’s getting better after all

In the **short term**, “better” meant

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Improved communication with leadership
- Improved planning
We want “better” to be **measurable**

- Need baselines
- Need standard methods for delivering projects
- Need time to complete a few projects
It’s getting better after all

To ensure we are all collecting consistent data, we created

• Project Cost Calculation Methods
• Resource Estimation Guidelines
• Document Templates
Challenges

• Need to know **when** PMs are needed – somewhere between all requests and only big requests

• Need **scalable** project management methods – focus on similarities of PMs

• Need moveable place in hierarchy – project specific roles are **temporary**

• Need to **measure** performance of project management – define “better”
Solutions

- Project Classification Guidelines
- Project Approval Process
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Documentation Guidelines
- Project Cost Calculation Method
- Resource Estimation Guidelines
Solutions

These challenges can be avoided (or resolved)

• Lay the foundation for project management
• Prepare your staff for the change
• Be open to new processes
• Educate your PMs about the culture
• Hire the “right” PMs
• Know that project salvage ≠ project mgmt
Unexpected Benefits

• Make business units feel like customers
• Conduct portfolio management
• Proactively manage risk
• Provide big picture
• Help turn oversight into project allies
Conclusions

• Implementing project management can be challenging
• Don’t let these challenges stand in your way, they are easily overcome
• Project management implementation will be beneficial, maybe even more so than expected
TASSCC Project Management Special Interest Group

- Network with Texas public sector PM professionals
- Discuss PM lessons learned
- Share current project management challenges
- Learn about PM tools and techniques
TASSCC Project Management Special Interest Group

• Meeting Frequency – Monthly

• Meeting Location – St. Edward’s University Professional Educational Center, Austin, TX

• Coordinator – Jennifer Pigeon

• Survey - [http://www.tasscc.org/news](http://www.tasscc.org/news)
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