

High-Performance IT

Projects and PMO

Health Check

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Part 9 - Projects and Project Management Office

Projects

How do Projects Fail? (One day at a time)

The Best practice IT Standard is:

A rigorous end to end, project management lifecycle with supporting how-to guidelines and templates.

Performance Health Check

1. What project management software is in use? Is it a standard?
2. Are project managers sufficiently experienced and trained?
3. Is the end-to-end project lifecycle process documented with supporting documentation on project plan, milestones, work breakdown structure, status reports, quality control, and SDLC methodology inclusion?
4. Is there a project master- plan showing all active and pending projects as well as project interdependencies?
5. How are independencies managed?
6. How many pending projects are currently on the project list?
7. How many projects are in-flight (active)?
8. Are project initiation and monitoring processes clearly defined?
9. Is there a rigorous approach to project evaluation, approval, and prioritisation?
10. What project management and control measures are in place?
11. Is the quality of project scope and requirements documentation, estimating, project plans & status reports of sufficient quality?
12. How do you assess project quality?
13. Are project post implementation reviews carried out?
14. Is proper escalation and expectation management in use?
15. How do you assess scheduling capability?
16. How do you assess estimating capability?
17. How are budgeting and cost controls managed?
18. What can the PMO do to help dedicate more technical staff to projects?

Sample Task list

1. Assess project initiation and management risks.
2. Assess need for project manager training.

3. Develop umbrella processes to manage intra-project dependencies and workflows?
4. Is the project master plan reviewed regularly?
5. Appoint a projects master plan owner with accountabilities.
6. Create a scheduling and estimating guide.
7. Create budget and cost management guidelines.
8. Determine further works required and scope out.
9. Breakdown the scope of works to task level, ready for loading into the change management project schedule.

Projects and Technical Resources Tip

Avoid multitasking. All projects have to be fully staffed or they can't launch. What's a fully staffed project? One that never waits for a team member to become available. Limit the number of concurrent projects to the number that can be fully staffed, and team members won't have to multitask. The outcome: Not only will each project complete faster, but the whole project portfolio will complete faster.

Project Management Office

The Best practice IT Standard is:

Is an active PMO. An active PMO receives standardised reporting from project managers, provides common traffic light style management reporting to the business and IT, actively monitors, and polices project progress against cost and schedule and holds project managers accountable for their performance. Additionally, it provides a suite of project management processes, templates, and how-to guidelines, such as how to estimate, create a schedule or produce a weekly progress report. It provides clearly defined project roles and responsibilities and an end-to-end projects delivery process that combines business and IT. An active PMO should be considered once the average number of small to medium-sized projects exceeds 15 per annum.

A high degree of project management standardisation is essential for ensuring quality and timely outcomes. This is because the standards in place become common to all projects, with all involved knowing what is expected of them irrespective of what team they are in. Finally, it provides a program management function across all of IT to oversee and coordinate the project schedules, resources, cross -project dependencies and the timely resolution of critical issues. It owns the macro view of all projects (the master plan). It provides the following management support to project managers and projects:

Projects and PMO Assessment

1. Governance and administrative support system for tracking issues, tracking changes, producing status reports and ensuring that the project runs smoothly.
2. Project management experience, including project planning and tracking skills (using an automated project management tool).
3. Assistance with project controls. These include the management control systems for deliverables, quality, inventory, costs, time recording, billing, security/confidentiality, service level agreements, risks, issues, problems and changes (both technical and contract).
4. Scheduling, organizing, preparing materials for and minutes for regular project meetings.
5. Owning and maintaining the central repository of information for the project. The central repository contains the project plans, the library of project deliverables, project filing and general project information, such as a contract, a holiday chart and contact points for all people associated with the project.

In contrast to an active PMO, the passive PMO does not monitor or police project progress against cost and schedule, nor does it hold project managers accountable for their performance. It receives reporting from project managers and may provide basic management reporting in turn.

Performance Questions

1. Is the PMO Passive or Active?
2. If passive, how is project performance assessed?
3. If an active PMO, how is project performance assessed?
4. Is there a Projects Portfolio Master Plan/Schedule?
5. How is the projects portfolio managed?
6. How are project inter-dependencies scheduled and managed?
7. Describe the end-to-end project process from inception to completion.
8. Do processes and how-to guidelines support the end-to-end project process?
9. What PMO software support is in use?
10. Are process templates standardised?
11. Are IT and business reporting integrated?
12. Does project status reporting use a traffic light reporting format?

Sample Task list

1. Review the end-to-end project implementation process.
2. Review templates and how-to guidelines.
3. What project management software is standard?
4. introduce software support for project monitoring?
5. Determine further works required and scope out.

6. Breakdown the scope of works to task level, ready for loading into the change management project schedule.

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