



# Strategic Consulting Associates

## Common PMO Pitfalls and How To Avoid Them

*Project Management Institute  
Heartland Chapter*

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Strategic Consulting Associates, L.L.C.  
12105 West Center Road #375  
Omaha, NE 68124  
Tel: 402.934.9350  
Fax: 402.641.9360  
[www.StrategicConsultingAssociates.com](http://www.StrategicConsultingAssociates.com)

For further information please contact:  
Marc C. Williams  
Tel: 402.490.0775  
[marc@StrategicConsultingAssociates.com](mailto:marc@StrategicConsultingAssociates.com)

- Lack Of Partnership
- Allowing The PMO To Become A Bureaucracy
- Process For The Sake Of Process
- Not Promoting The PMO
- No Executive Support
- Loosing The Big “Mo”
- Not Measuring Success

## Lack of Partnership

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...*“the customer is always right”*

- Issues:

- Relationships with users of PMO services based on traditional “customer” metaphor don’t work as well.
  - *“I’m the customer. I’ll change my mind about what I want any #S%& time I want to!”*
- Projects are highly collaborative environments with all stakeholders having a great deal of skin in the game.

- Approach:

- Move from a customer-centric to a partner-centric relationship. Share the burden of success and failure *equally*.

**Projects have a better chance at success when the customer participates as a full-fledged partner in projects and their implementation.**

# Allowing The PMO To Become A Bureaucracy

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*...adding little value to the organization*

- Issues:

- PMO's can become just another layer to work through to get stuff done.
  - *“What value have you contributed today?”*

- Approach:

- Successful project offices provide value for the customer in every interaction
- Successful project offices excel when three basic “value areas” are paid attention to
  - Communication                      Leadership                      Training

Have a vision for your PMO and make sure value contribution is part of that vision.  
Constantly demonstrate and prove your value.

## Allowing The PMO To Become A Bureaucracy (cont.)

The Value Added PMO			
Value Area	Value Add		
Project Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Channeled communications</li> <li>• <b>Common project language</b></li> <li>• Resource issue identification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased inter-project resource utilization</li> <li>• <b>Concerns raised to executives in a timely manner</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk identification and mitigation</li> <li>• <b>A common, consistent method of communication delivery</b></li> </ul>
Project Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clarity of outcomes &amp; objectives</b></li> <li>• <b>Reduced risks</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Line of sight between project organizational strategy</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased likelihood of project success</li> <li>• Advocacy for a given project</li> </ul>
Project Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced costs</li> <li>• <b>Increased likelihood of success</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives met</li> <li>• <b>Consistent application of methodology</b></li> </ul>

## Process For Sake Of Process

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### *...becoming process Nazis*

- Issues:
  - Many project offices find it easier to focus on process and methodology versus project execution.
- Approach:
  - Take a minimalist approach to process definition and implementation.
  - Identify areas for process improvement that fit well with your culture and manage their implementation like a project.
  - Demonstrate and sell the value of the minimal processes chosen.

**Use process to further good execution, not for the sake of process itself.**

# Not Promoting The PMO

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*...and loosing sight of the value it contributes*

- Issues:
  - PMO's (and IT in general) do not generally promote the value contribution they make.
- Approach:
  - Build a marketing & communications campaign.
  - Create a cross-functional team that guides the campaign.
    - Project Office
    - Communications
    - IS Management & Staff
    - User Management & Staff

# Not Promoting The PMO

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*...and loosing sight of the value it contributes*

- Approach (cont.)
  - Identify Audience Segments and Scope of Campaign
    - Identify all audience segments
    - Identify appropriate communication themes for each audience
    - Create timing for each audience and communication theme
  - Defining communications vehicles
    - Print (Brochures)
    - Multimedia
      - PowerPoint, video's, web-based presentations
    - Identify which audience responds best to which vehicles

**Market and brand your PMO like the service it is.**

## No Executive Support

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*...not making the case*

- Issues:
  - Not establishing or not maintaining executive support
- Approach:
  - Ensure projects support business goals and strategy
    - Be an in-house consultant
  - Demonstrate strategic value of the PMO by focusing on:
    - Value creation potential
    - Economic impact of improved project management
    - Impact of a transparent resource management process
    - Impact of a transparent budget management process

# Loosing the Big 'Mo'

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*...avoid loosing momentum*

- Issues:
  - Any process change results in a temporary slowdown as it is integrated into common practice.
- Approach:
  - Do not become reactive to politics and perception. In other words, “maintain the course”.
  - Be flexible in taking feedback, yet stay true to the vision.
  - Evolve the PMO in line with the organization culture and change processes incrementally.
  - Don't expect overnight results and measure success wherever you can.

## Not Measuring Success

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*You can't manage what you can't measure.*

- Issues:
  - Many PMO's do not consider any objective measures of success
  - If measures of success are developed, they are usually not done with partners.
  - Thus, the “no involvement, no commitment” effect takes place
- Approach:
  - Consider using a PMO Balanced Scorecard.

# Not Measuring Success (cont.)

*You can't manage what you can't measure. Consider using a PMO Balanced Scorecard developed with partners.*

	Strategy Map - Project Management Foundation	Objectives	Measure	Target	Initiative
Financial		F1. Track and report project costs against estimates	1. Report cost tracking on strategic initiatives 2. Cost Variance	1. 100% 2. x%	1. Develop a cost tracking mechanism
Customer		C1. Provide regular status of projects C2. Provide information required for CPG prioritization C3. Provide business case for each project C4. Track non-IS resources	1. Regular Team, CPG, Exec Com status 2. Project portfolio information 3. Business cases for strategic projects 4. Resource mgt	1. 100% 2. TBR 3. 100% 4. TBR	1. Develop progress status process 2. Develop project information repository that supports prioritization 3. Develop business case process 4. Develop resource mgt process and tool
Internal		I1. Accurate reporting I2. Track IS resources I3. Implement risk mgt. I4. Implement planning I5. Define and manage requirements	1. Frequency of updates 2. % of resources tracked 3. % of projects with risk mgt plan 4. Signed off project plans 5. Signed off specs	1. W/M/Q 100% 2. IS 100% 3. Strategic 100% 4. Strategic 100% 5. Strategic 100%	1. Develop task tracking mechanism 2. Develop resource mgt process and tool 3. Develop risk mgt methodology 4. Develop project plan template/process 5. Develop requirements mgt process
Learning & Growth		LG1. Hire qualified PM's LG2. Provide project management training LG3. Provide mentoring to project managers not assigned to Project Office	1. Positions filled IAW hiring qualification 2. % of IS staff trained 3. % of non-IS staff trained	1. 100% 2. 25%/quarter 3. TBR	1. Initiate hiring process 2. Develop training program 3. Develop mentoring program

## Not Measuring Success (cont.)

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*You can't manage what you can't measure. Consider using a PMO Balanced Scorecard developed with partners.*

### Project Management

- Delivery Dates (actual v. estimates)
- % completed milestones
- % completed deliverables
- No. & size of project changes

### Budget

- Estimated v. actual budgets
- % variance
- Resource availability
- \$ spent in outsourcing and contracting

## Not Measuring Success (cont.)

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*You can't manage what you can't measure. Consider using a PMO Balanced Scorecard developed with partners.*

### Resource

- Staff availability
- Staff capacity
- Skill level saturation
- No. of resources with particular expertise

### Quality

- Partner satisfaction surveys
- Rework
- Defects found in specific phases
- Changes

- PMO's can create great value with strategic implications.
- PMO managers and staff need to keep their eye on the vision of the PMO.
- Promote the value and avoid the pitfalls!
- Measure your performance

**THANK YOU !**