



Communicating the Value Add of a Project Management Best Practice

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In the last posting, we discussed the growing interest in establishing best practices around project management and discussed generally how to get started. In this posting, we are going to focus on how to communicate the value add to the organization of having a project management best practice.

Without significant buy-in throughout the organization, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to get a best practice off the ground. Remember also, as noted in the last posting, undoubtedly there are best practices in the organization that have been used for quite a while and are successful. They may be informal best practices – but that doesn't make them any less valuable to the organization as a whole.

First, you must have executive level support for developing a common project management best practice within the organization. You don't need someone on the executive level necessarily demanding this happens (literally "putting their foot down,") but the goal is that the executive level recognizes the need for common processes in project management and supports the initiative through their actions and words. You may have to educate the executive group to get their commitment. If projects are getting completed, even if the executives are unconsciously putting the project team under duress and people's frustrations are high, from the executives' perspective – all may be well. The project is completed. Remember – the executives do not see the day-to-day work and may not understand what is actually involved in managing the project. They may see only the end result which may have been accomplished through heroic efforts. Heroic efforts can't be the norm in any organization. It is stressful for the project team and will not sustain over time. Ultimately, quality and resource issues will occur.

So, let's discuss the steps involved in communicating the value-add to the organization. In the previous posting, we talked about the importance of determining what processes already exist and sharing all of those "individual" processes with each individual process owner. Our goal is to have them communicate with each other about how they are working on their projects, what works for them/what doesn't work and come to some consensus on how to share processes with each other for some consistency. Your goal is to facilitate this conversation.

Now...we are ready to share with the rest of the organization. Below are some ways to get started – there are many other options; these are a few that have worked successfully for me with some clients.

- Send an interoffice memo to all relevant staff about the organizational goals to develop standard processes/best practices around the project management function. (Do you have an internal web site? If so, put the information out on the site for all employees to see.)
 - Include:
 - Current processes being used with credit given to their "owners"



- Examples of successful projects in connection with the use of these current processes
- Benefits of establishing consistent processes throughout the organization
- Examples of other organizations where a project management best practice has shown a positive ROI
- What does it mean for them
- Host a Breakfast Get-Together and/or Lunch & Learn
 - Have the process “owners” talk about their processes and best practices
 - What are their processes and best practices for managing projects?
 - How do they use them on a variety of projects?
 - Ask them to describe some of their successes. (And...no doubt there have been failures – discuss those too! How have they adjusted their processes and best practices to make it work?)
- Provide access to a portal where project management staff and others in the organization can get information, including:
 - A listing of current (informal and formal) best practices and processes already in use
 - A listing of project resources including their expertise to help with implementing the processes and sharing best practices
 - Any templates and tools being used throughout the organization
 - A discussion forum to ask questions/get answers, discuss the use of the process/best practice, share information and problem solve.

What are some other methods you have for communicating around the project management function within the organization?