



Project Management *is* Strategic

Author: Gina Abudi, MBA, Partner/VP Peak Performance Group, Inc.

Lately I have seen an increasing number of organizations who are interested in looking at project management as a strategic function within the organization. (Yes...project management is tactical; but it's strategic too and it is time that organizations look at it from a strategic viewpoint.) When project management is seen as strategic, all projects are linked to the strategic goals of the organization – projects are chosen that meet the objectives of the organization and help the organization continue to thrive and prosper. There is a process and a methodology around choosing the right projects at the right time. Project managers are involved in these decisions and have an understanding of how the project is aligned to the strategic goals of the organization. They aren't just tossed a project and told to complete it. These individuals also have an understanding of the business and its working parts; individuals who will be able to take on a leadership role in the future.

It's more than program management; although that is a part of strategic project management too certainly. It's being involved in strategic planning to make decisions on what projects support the long term goals of the organization. It's being innovative and thinking outside the box about the most appropriate projects to take on to ensure the organization's long term success.

For one organization that has recognized the value of looking at project management more strategically, the organization is working on development of a program focused on high potential project managers who are being groomed for future leadership roles within the organization – in various business units and functions. Additionally, project management will be another function within the organization – alongside Finance, Human Resources and Production/Manufacturing as an example. This is an organization that is mature in how it manages projects – with a governance structure in place and project management processes and procedures that have developed over time and are re-tested regularly to ensure they remain effective and efficient for the organization. Only those projects that will have a positive impact on the bottom line are selected to be completed and there is a formal selection process in place within the organization.

I'm aware that such companies are few and far between. Many companies – and frankly many project managers! – still see project management as being tactical and not strategic. But I state again...that has to change and I think we will start to see some changes begin to occur.