PMO – Requirements and Applications

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1- Introduction

Project management has become a necessity for the control of progress for projects regardless of its sizes and complexity. Although PM is very essential and critical for large scale such as high rise buildings, infrastructure projects, new modern cities and islands. Those projects cannot be achieved within the designed time and budget without creating a real plan how to guide these projects. On the other hand, many project management methodologies were prepared and designed to fit the new requirements of the stakeholders and project managers. Those methodologies are different in the content, size and easy to be applied, also they are different due to different types of projects. In order to get the benefit of the available methodologies, and to apply them within a healthy atmosphere to enable the project managers to manage their projects in the proper way, the necessity of the Project Management Office has come up to create another rule of the project management.

2- Why the company should consider adopting Project Management Office (PMO)?

The implementing of PMO will support the company including its top management and stakeholders to control their operations and define the responsibilities within the company '*The responsibilities of a PMO can range from providing project management support functions to actually being responsible for the direct management of a project*' (The Project Management Institute, Inc., 2008:11).

Santosus (2003) refers the reasons of establishing a PMO to two reasons which are '***improving project success rates and implementing standard practices***'. These two reasons can be the milestone to decide whether to establish PMO or not. This decision is built in accordance with many criteria before it takes place. When the company is committed to execute different projects through using a separate staff for each one, this will create a need to organize and manage these staffs. On the other hand, each project is unique; therefore it needs different applications, systems, and requirements to be done through the project life. Therefor establishing a PMO will help the company to unify the process of managing all projects through unified and standardized methodologies for Projects Managers and Projects Staff as well. These

methodologies shall support the Companies main goals such as working on Time, within Budget, with the Required Quality and to the Customer`s Satisfaction.

3- What steps should be followed in building a successful Project Management Office (PMO)?

➢ In order to establish a PMO, the first step is getting the approval and commitment from the stakeholders0, because their commitment will guarantee the required flow of any next step. It is very important to convince the stakeholders about the importance of PMO since it will create some additional payments within the next short period, which is something not preferable to any owner to pay for something not required, whereas it will save a lot when managing all the available projects in a proper way.

➢ It is a major step to assign professional PMO management which will be the direct responsible and director for all the next processes and to plan the relation between the projects. Also it will be the key player for the available resources to be shifted between the projects without any negative results and the direct responsible who will forward the correct and required status to stakeholders.

➢ '*Launch slowly and with careful project planning*' (Stanleigh, 2010). It is very important, when deciding to establish a PMO, to make a proper plan how to introduce the new feature to the available staff and projects. Since it will be the direct responsible for all the resources and projects, there must be a clear clarification for everyone about the importance of implementing PMO and its managerial scope of work.

➢ '*Keep concepts and processes simple and proceed slowly with their implementation*' (Stanleigh, 2010). When implementing a PMO, new processes will raise to replace the current system. These new processes have to be prepared and checked before submitting to the actual implementation. The new assigned PMO managers are responsible to decide, check, revise and apply the required new system. Therefore the new applied system has to be introduced in a proper and easy way to enable all the available resources to understand and apply it.

➢ '*Focus on training, mentoring and leading by example*' (Stanleigh, 2010). As a new system to be applied, the available resources should be familiar with it. To guarantee the successful implementation of the new system, a sufficient training should be available for everyone involved with it. Proper training and applying similar examples will ease the duty of PMO to apply the new system, to find out the entire requirement and to select the distinct available resources to be the guider of the first step of the implementation of the new system

➢ '*Establish project success measures to provide senior management with relevant information for decision-making affecting project completion*' (Stanleigh, 2010). As a result of the first and major step, the top management and stakeholders should be updated about all the new applied steps and the expected results. Also, the expected or occasional difficulties should be raised to the top management in order to make the proper coordination in order to make the proper required decision.

➢ '*Consider the Culture*' (Sipe, 2008). As a new atmosphere of work, new projects and companies have multi-national team which may have labors and management staff from East to West, which means having many cultures in the

same team. This variation of culture requires a particular attention by the top management which is represented by PMO staff. PMO management should build the required collaboration between the team members without making any gap between them.

➢ '*Take the Long View*' (Sipe, 2008). Since the implementation of PMO will create new system and processes, this means a long process of changing and stepping forward. This change will not give the required results within a short period, because it needs its normal time to be implemented, understood, accepted by all parties and then to come back with the required results. This point of view is very important to be clear for the stakeholders to avoid any conflict in expectations. Any investor looks to get successful results within the shortest possible period, which cannot be applicable here. Thereof, proper planning and clear definition for each step is essential to keep the process ongoing without creating any possible undesired or unexpected withdraw by the stakeholders.

➢ 'Grouping similar projects and managing them in a similar manner' (Visitask, 2010). The scope of PMO is prepared as a uniformed system and process to be applicable on all projects, therefore keeping all parties within one cycle of process in order to save efforts, time and cost and to ease the internal shifting between projects as per the requirements of each.

4- Conclusion

Visitask (2010) summarizes the successful of PMO through '*the right processes, the right tools and the right people*' which are the main keys for implementing any new system. In order to convince the stakeholders to implement PMO, a proper investigation to the company requirement is essential regarding the available system and what will be the new system, the available skilled members and what will be the requirements to hire new skilled staff, and to select the correct tools which are available, low cost and easy to be implemented.

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