

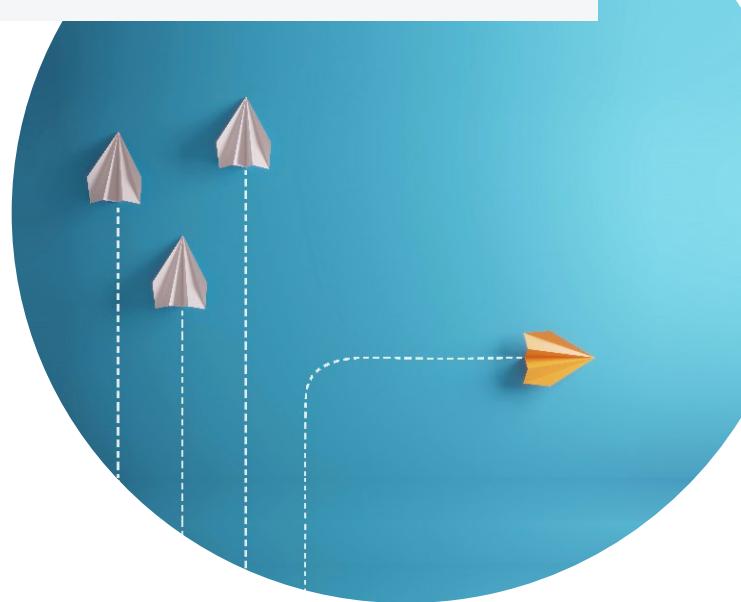


A New PMO Mindset for Building Resiliency in Your Organization

For a long time, Project Management Offices (PMOs) were not well liked throughout their organizations. Project managers and team members thought of their PMO as an overbearing and micromanaging force over their projects. While the purpose of a PMO has never been to micromanage projects, it's easy to see how PMOs would gain this reputation in their efforts to see project portfolios executed. However, this reputation is starting to change as some successful PMOs shift their mindset from executing project portfolios to delivering value. While this shift may just seem like semantics, the reality is that this new PMO mindset not only earns praise from project managers and team members but ensures that no matter how an organization changes or adapts, a PMO will always be ready to reliably deliver results.

The Reinvented PMO

Previous iterations of the PMO focused too much on project outputs, but the future of the PMOs is changing. PMOs are beginning to concentrate on delivering overall value to an organization. What is considered valuable may vary by organization, but there are generally two types of benefits: ones that impact the project managers and team members and ones that impact upper management (or the people that make decisions in an organization).



A PMO Should Work for Everyone

One of the best ways PMOs focus on delivering value is by increasing productivity, decreasing unexpected costs and preventing project slowdowns. This is predominantly done through [resource planning](#) and [project prioritization](#). When organizations have more demand than availability for certain workers or skills it creates tension among project teams that either need to work overtime or wait for availability to finish projects. You can ask any project manager; this is not an ideal solution because it frustrates workers which results in lowered productivity and it increases project costs in overtime pay or delayed projects. This way of handling resource planning simply isn't sustainable, and it doesn't provide any value whatsoever.



Instead, a successful PMO plans to carefully anticipate issues before they occur and is vigilant to identify them as soon as possible so they can be resolved quickly. The PMO will work to find the solution that best helps the organization reach its corporate goals, which very likely isn't enforcing overtime or letting projects stall. A PMO will find a realistic solution or go to an organization's executives to make an informed decision about how to proceed. This takes the frustration out of daily project execution so things can not only run efficiently but in a meaningful way. When workers feel like their PMO removes roadblocks rather than creates them, they will be quick to change their opinion about PMOs.

For senior executives and upper management, a PMO delivers value by making corporate strategy a reality. To do this, PMOs will deliver transparency, objectivity and valuable insights needed for making better decisions about the organization's future. Senior executives will make tough decisions that have the potential to take an organization to new heights or new lows. It's imperative that these decision-makers can make the right decisions, but they can't do this without the help of the value a PMO provides.

Providing transparency means upper management understands the true impact of projects in the portfolio including the resources and budgets they need and the benefits the projects will provide to the company. If there are tradeoffs or dependencies, management is informed so they can take these into consideration before taking action. A PMO will also be objective when helping decision-makers understand which projects are priority. Delivering value means projects must be objectively evaluated for its contribution to corporate strategy. Finally, a PMO will collect all the valuable details and information needed for executives to make the best decisions about the portfolio. Without this, executives make uninformed decisions that can prove to be costly.





How to Shift Your PMO Mindset

A PMO focused on delivering value works for everyone. So how do you shift the mindset of your PMO from completing projects to delivering value?

1. **Treat your PMO like a business unit.** A PMO is not a temporary project or experiment. Give it the respect you would any other department. Your PMO should have intangible things like budgets and processes and tangible things like actual office space and desks for members of the PMO.
2. **Make strategy actionable.** PMOs serve as a very important link between the corporate strategy developed by executives and project teams. Creating this link means taking corporate strategy and translating it into something actionable for project teams. By doing so, project teams better understand the *why* behind the projects they work on and executives can rest easy knowing the corporate strategy is at the heart of all projects.
3. **Trust your project teams.** The job of a PMO is not to manage projects. If you try, you will only slow down projects and frustrate good employees. Instead, trust that your project teams can and will get the job done. While issues will arise that need the aid of the PMO, the day-to-day execution should be left to the experts – project managers and team leads.
4. **Portfolio coordinators should act like business leaders.** Every PMO has a portfolio coordinator (or several), but it would be a mistake for a portfolio coordinator to act like one. Although he or she might be a portfolio coordinator in title, this individual is actually a business leader and should act like one. They should empower project teams and support them when they need it. A business leader serves as a trusted guide that navigates but doesn't demand. This is the most powerful way to start delivering value.

The Future of the PMO

The successful PMO of today is very different than it was just twenty years ago. While PMOs shouldn't forget all the lessons in project management they learned in years past, it's time for PMOs to evolve so they can do an even better job helping organizations become resilient and adaptable in turbulent times. As dynamic markets continue to fluctuate, consumer demands change and technology rapidly develops, all organizations will need a PMO that can steer the organization toward growth and success no matter what changes they face.

Get started [building your value-delivering PMO](#) today.