



PMO Toolkit: Re-defining project management standards for successful execution

Project management involves the planning and organization of a company's resources to move a specific task, event, or duty towards completion. It can involve a one-time project or an ongoing activity, and resources managed may cover a range including personnel, finances, technology & intellectual property.

A project management office (PMO) is a group driving project execution through creating scheduling efficiency, documenting processes and reporting best practices and next steps centrally. A PMO is typically recommended for large, complex, or multi-workstream projects. The upfront cost of implementing the PMO saves a higher long-term cost arising from project inefficiencies. In light of the new ways of working due to COVID, teams are more dispersed and a central PMO becomes even more critical for efficient project execution. We believe a PMO is a fundamental and critical capability required to orchestrate a successful project as it presents several benefits, including:

- **Visibility** - Creating transparency to predict risks and align on project outcomes
- **Agility** - Driving agility by establishing linkages and dependencies between workstreams
- **Center of Excellence** - Creating a central, end-to-end management office driving alignment and support across all projects and workstreams
- **Quality** - Creating best practices across projects for optimal resourcing & deliverables
- **People** - Increasing awareness and raising value for project stakeholders

At a-connect we challenged the incomplete market perception of PMO work to develop the [PMO2 framework](#). In this article, we push the envelope further to provide a step-by-step process to establish your own PMO.

Key considerations for setting up your PMO: Think of the project management process as composed of three main stages.



1 Establish Objectives

- Clarify PMO objectives to align with sponsors' expectations
- Create project milestones to track progress towards the aligned objectives

2 Identify Sponsor(s) and Stakeholder

- A senior/executive sponsor mandates PMO requirements and enables transparency
- The sponsor can remove barriers and enable faster issue resolution
- Identify stakeholders and draft a RACI (responsible, accountable, consulted, informed) map

3 Create Tools and processes

- Based on functions the PMO would need to support, create tools and processes for:
 - Financial planning (budget)
 - RAID management (Risks, Assumptions, Issues, Dependencies)
 - Performance KPIs & Reporting (report types and cadence)
 - Quality assurance
 - Change control (scope, costs, schedule, benefits)
 - Resourcing (org design, recruitment, resource planning)
 - Communication
 - Procurement
 - Documents repository

4 Source Infrastructure (skills and resources needed)

- Ensure skills and resources align with PMO objectives and can deliver on them
- Develop detailed and consistent project onboarding approach
- Develop teams by workstreams/activities and assign resources and tasks

5 Organize Engagement and Communication with key stakeholders

- Clearly communicate objectives, outcomes, responsibilities, and expectations
- Gain positive confirmation by establishing open communication and feedback channel
- Establish project governance model and issue escalation process
- Establish check-ins with PMO managers and stakeholders to gauge team morale

6 Set-up Reporting Cadence

- Develop and communicate comprehensive progress reports to key stakeholders
- Adhere to reporting cadence to keep sponsor(s) updated about progress
- Establish systems to capture learnings & feedback for continuous improvement
- Perform a final project budget and prepare a final project report

The above approach is second nature at a-connect – an approach that has allowed us to successfully help clients solve their most pressing problems. Empowerment and engagement of stakeholders helps transition the organization to new ways of working. The **'Project Kick-Off'** is an ideal opportunity to set the governance and expectations with all stakeholders. To institutionalize the necessary processes in the long term, the PMO needs to drive towards creating a change culture in-house to ensure continued improvement.

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