

A Checklist of Six Best Practices for Implementing and Running a Successful PMO

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Here's a checklist of six best practices for implementing and running a successful PMO.

Project Management Offices have become increasingly commonplace as organizations realize the need for a centralized department to make sure all projects are managed efficiently and effectively from concept to completion. PMOs are particularly important to businesses that have a continuous flow of multiple, overlapping projects sharing operations, technology and human resources.

"Companies need to take stock of their overall business processes and decide where a PMO will fit. It's important that the PMO is in line with the company's goals so that the projects don't become shortsighted and collapse due to lack of support," says Jim Stroh, CEO of project management consultancy [Proggex](#). When implementing a PMO, Stroh recommends a top-down approach so that it is not viewed as another layer of bureaucracy but instead as an organizational unit that is adding value to the enterprise. Here is Stroh's checklist of six best practices when creating and running a PMO.

___ PMOs Are Projects. A charter is needed that will specify the purpose of the PMO in the organization. This charter will highlight executive support for the PMO implementation. The PMO also requires a scope statement, a WBS, metrics to measure its performance, and a communications management plan.

___ Commit to Change. Implementation of a PMO represents a major cultural change for an organization. Senior management's support for and commitment to the PMO is essential. Time must be set aside for meetings with stakeholders and briefings with various teams throughout the organization so they recognize the purpose and added value of the PMO. Also, it is important not to attempt an overly ambitious implementation in a short period of time.

___ Define Roles. The roles of the PMO in an organization should be methodically defined. Specific functions to be performed must be known to everyone who is involved with the affected project or in the organization. A PMO organization chart, including roles and responsibilities, should be prepared and disseminated to the organization.

___ Stakeholder Support. Support for the PMO's functions must be obtained from stakeholders at all levels. PMO services should be implemented in line with business drivers and project issues. A key function of the PMO should be to serve as a clearinghouse of project management best practices, tools and techniques.

___ Ongoing Review. To foster project management improvement an organization should regularly conduct a PMO assessment. This review will help to identify strengths and weaknesses and areas of improvement in the organization's project management practice.

___ Use Technology. Find the right project management tools to manage your PMO. While there are many software packages available, first review what you already utilize in-house. Match the skillset and experience of your staff with the solution. The toolkit should not be the end, but a means to the end to successfully and efficiently manage your PMO, portfolio and projects.