

# A PMO's Definition, Roles and Benefits

▲ By Engr. Ahmed Masad Alghamrawi



Organizations need to successfully manage and control of the right initiatives via allocate the right resources and standardize their reports, processes, procedures, tools, techniques, and the language of the initiatives. The recent research has shown that around 90% of outputs, and related outcomes and benefits of the initiatives were struggling to meet their constraints such as costs, time, risk, resources, quality and stakeholders satisfaction. Another research indicated that around 69% of the initiatives' failures were result of poor project management (Camilleri, 2012).

A PMO became necessary to maintain time and save money required to achieve the initiatives' objectives successfully. So, companies is striving to increase their knowledge related to the Project Management Offices (PMOs) to cope the competitive and dynamic environment in which they live. This importance of PMOs creates the need to highlight their roles, benefits returned to the organizations when they properly establish or reactivate a PMO.

As indicated by some researchers, The PMO does not have a specific roles or definition, while others believed that the PMO roles may include leadership &

getting working done properly (Taylor, 2011). The Project Management Office (PMO) is an organizational entity "whether individuals or groups" aims to standardize the reports, processes, procedures and distribute best practices to manage the projects across an organization in order to maximize the benefits and efficiently achieve the expected objectives. It also is capturing the lessons learned in order to enable the decision makers within the organization and efficiently deliver the organization's strategy.

Nowadays, many organizations have recognized that they need PMOs to maintain alignment of initiatives to their strategy and to monitor and track initiatives to achieve the initiatives' expected goals and benefits.

They found that, the Project management offices take upon themselves some strategic tasks and duties such as administrative assistance to achieve the organization's strategic objectives, prioritizing components of the programs and portfolios in line with the organization's strategy. Additionally, PMO is improving the efficient and effective management of the organizations' processes by applying a set of processes and procedures based on pre-defined roles and responsibilities. This governance ensures the timely decision-making process at

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the appropriate level, by right person or entity based on the correct and sufficient information.

On the other hand, the PMO is sharing the methodologies, tools, techniques, manuals, and systems required to achieve the projects' objectives. It is contributing to improve the performance according to the pre-defined constraints. The PMO is building and maintaining the infrastructure of the project management within the organizations to support the initiatives from the early stage and passing through the delivery of their outputs, realize their benefits until successfully closing out process of these initiatives "throughout the portfolio component's lifecycle", with full integration of organizations' divisions, departments, sections and business unit within organizational capacity.

The success factors of PMO are support of senior management, gain commitment of all levels within an organization via full integration with other entities or departments within the organization and collaboratively working with the organization's business units. Additionally, the selecting appropriate model based on current assessment of the organization and its maturity considered as a critical success factors.

Many benefits that added value to organizations such as increasing of stakeholders satisfactions, enhancing

organizations' performance, addressing the conflict between initiatives and managing the interdependencies between them. moreover, these benefits include removing the barriers to efficiently achieve initiatives' objectives, timely providing the accurate information for authorized, decreasing the management and control effort, maximizing the opportunities, minimizing the threats and increasing the successful probabilities of initiatives.

Finally, the following are some recommendation that should be considered to implement and operate a PMO and to avoid any potential failures:

- PMO's effects should be seen, since the value added by a PMO may be appeared through several years reach to five years. This long time required to develop the organizations' capacity, necessary resources, build appropriate governance, address the current issues, remove the barriers and overcome the challenges. Therefore, during this long time a PMO's staff should present quick wins to demonstrate the value added to the organization such as Quarterly KPIs, activate business case and collaboratively work with the organization's Business units, in order to gain the senior management support which is a critical success factor.

- Carefully research and current assessment should be done on a PMO staffing and workforce strategy to pinpoint the

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improvement opportunities, to create a clear vision and to avoid any mishandling. This vision should be agreed by highest management to determine the required functions and services should be provided by PMO and its optimal roles in order to design and implement the appropriate model.

- The PMO's staff should be carefully assigned to ensure that they are fully realized the PMO's vision, objectives, duties and tasks required to add a real value to the organization.

- Short-term and long-term planning, and objectives should be integrated, as well as balance between business as usual and the intended change should be highly considered. Additionally, the critical success factors including full integration with other business units within the organization and full understand their scope of work and the services that provided by them.

- An appropriate governance framework should be built to ensure alignment with the organization's strategy which include stopping any wrong initiative or business as usual and verify that the ongoing initiatives are well done to realize the desired benefits.

- It is a change when we create a new PMO or reactivate an existing one, so this change entailed to follow one of change models to secure the transforming from

AS IS, to TO BE.

- Closely Managing the organizations' leadership expectations and getting their feedback are critical success factors, as well as appropriately engagement with stakeholders will increase their cooperation and prevent any potential failure since the PMO will be supported by all levels within the organization.

- Creating and developing all plans required to ensure good tracking, mentor and control the desired benefits, interdependencies, right allocation of resources, minimizing the threats and maximizing the opportunities.

- PMO's team should be carefully elected, invested and supported by providing the necessary training / coaching in order to enable them to carry out the tasks and responsibilities entrusted to them.

- Incorporate the proper information technology system as it became a vital aspect for any change process required to cope this advanced environment.

- PMO's staff should be fully focusing on value added to an organization rather than tools, techniques, methods, methodologies or PMO-related decisions.

- The support and commitment should be gained from senior managers, stakeholders, head of PMO and its staff.