White Paper 2018-09

How to Develop the Project Management Maturity Level of an Organization

Improving the Project Management Maturity Level of an organization is a must to improve the predictability and cost-effectiveness of project execution, in particular for Large and Complex Projects. Following up on White Paper 2018-08 'How Measure an Organization's Project Management Maturity level', in this White Paper we examine what are the conditions and the constraints for maturity enhancement of a project-driven organization.

Organizational transformation projects are required for Project Management Maturity improvements

Increasing the Project Management Maturity Level of an organization is a must to confidently tackle larger and more complex projects. Our experience shows that it is generally not the result of a natural continuous improvement program. Maturity levels typically improve by jumps occasioned by targeted transformation programs, because they require substantial changes of paradigm and habits for employees. These programs are often implemented after a particularly negative experience in the execution of a project or as a result of the arrival of executives that have experienced more mature organizations.

The size of the transformation project can be quite limited when it deals with improving the maturity level of a particular office that needs to catch up with the theoretical maturity level of the organization. The ambition of the project will be much greater if it targets the entire organization, in particular if it is constituted by several distant offices that have to work collaboratively on projects. In any case, because those transformation projects require changes of paradigm, they can only be catalysed by external parties to the organization, either peers from other offices, new hires or external consultants. However, to ensure success an internal team should be mobilized to effectively develop fit-for-purpose solutions and prepare for the roll-out (refer to our White Paper GDM-PVD-2015-02 'Why 'Embedded Consulting' Delivers Better Results for Enterprise Transformation'). This internal team then benefits from external inputs as required to question the current ways of working and produce the necessary changes.

Project Management Maturity Improvement Project Phases

Transformation projects are necessarily long projects from 6 to 18 months because of the time to change habits and the need to include a comprehensive roll-out of new tools and solutions and associated substantial training for employees. They are therefore a substantial investment for the organization.

> A successful Project Management Maturity transformation project must address all dimensions of project management in a comprehensive manner.

Project Management Maturity Improvement projects follow the same general phasing as transformation projects. PVD applies the '4D' approach:
- Phase 1: Discovery, measurement of maturity on all applicable dimensions,
- Phase 2: Definition: definition of priorities and key deliverables; full scope definition; overall implementation schedule,
- Phase 3: Development: key deliverables are developed and tested,
- Phase 4: Deployment: roll-out: and deployment of new working habits, processes and systems throughout the organization, within a comprehensive Change Management plan.

Key practices for successful Project Management Maturity improvement transformation projects

Comprehensiveness and consistency of coverage

As mentioned in our White Paper 2018-07 'Project Management Maturity level for Large Complex Infrastructure Projects', a consistent maturity level is required in 3 different dimensions:
- People competencies, processes and Information Systems,
- Over the full project lifecycle (from project definition, tendering and contracting, up to project close-out),
- Across the various disciplines that contribute to the project.

Therefore, the transformation project must be broad enough to cover those three dimensions in a sufficient manner. As the strength of a chain is the strength of the weakest link, it is important in those transformation projects to cover the full field in a comprehensive way. Obviously, some parts of the organization will already be more advanced than others and the transformation program must take this into account, and still focus on transverse issues and consistency of approaches.

A specific issue is the possible difficulty to include in the same transformation project both areas of project execution and of project preparation and definition or tendering. Yet it is essential to cover the full project lifecycle of the project.

Priority areas for the transformation project

Because of the particulars of project dynamics, the following areas are particularly critical and should be priorities for the transformation project:

- Sufficient Information Systems for reliably managing project data and enabling effective collaboration,
- Project development / tendering phases up to project startup,
- Integrated project team setup from the start of the project,
- Project control disciplines as key enablers.

Leverage and time improvements with the expected start-up of new projects

One specific issue of project-driven organizations is that it is extremely difficult to retrofit improvements to projects that are already in execution phase. Therefore, the definition and setup of transformation projects must account for the expected timing of the sanction and start of new projects, so as to deliver improvements at that decisive stage. Because it is not always possible to anticipate precisely the actual start-up of the execution of new projects, the transformation plan must be flexible enough to accommodate business constraints while reaching its goals.

> **Improving Project Management Maturity requires a Transformation Project. It cannot be a continuous process.**

Conclusion

Improving the Project Management Maturity Level of an organization requires a comprehensive organization transformation project. It needs to address in a comprehensive manner a large number of dimensions of the organization. It also needs to be carefully prioritized and timed to fit with the needs of the organization. However, it is a must for an organization to be mature enough to successfully tackle Large Complex Projects.

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