MANAGE A MINIMUM-VIABLE PMO

Provide project managers with processes that they have the time to follow.

Hello?

+ Survival Kit

1

As portfolio manager, you're responsible for communicating portfolio status and capacity for new projects. In this, you rely on project managers (PMs) for timely and accurate project data in order to maintain the portfolio.

2

Many of your PMs are "de facto" project managers. Their PM responsibilities have been allocated on top of their full-time jobs as developers or system administrators.

3

Complicating things further, your organization's appetite for process and new projects outpaces its propensity to invest in PM time. In other words, your IT projects are managed by a team of "part-time" managers who must manage projects "off the side of the desk" without time allocated for project management.

4

This blueprint prescribes minimum-viable project management tools and practices to help time-strapped project managers effectively manage their projects, and maintain reporting and record-keeping standards. Our goal is to help minimum-viable PMOs and portfolio managers implement a resource-optimized, practical, and tactical set of expectations, tools, and training to help the de facto PMs succeed as both IT practitioners and as PMs.

While you can't make time appear out of thin air, you can find the right balance of discipline and tools to successfully manage projects when your organization does not allocate time for project managers to spend on project management duties.

Project management success doesn't equal project success. While formal methodologies can be a key ingredient to project success for some organizations, the fact is that the vast majority of projects in IT departments do not require such rigid and detailed processes. In most cases, they do not have the resources to support them.
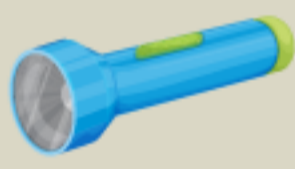
The typical project manager spends 80% of their time on project planning and record-keeping duties, which is a good way to feel busy but doesn't necessarily add value. Focus instead on the minimum required to maintain accuracy of portfolio reporting and effectiveness of managing projects.

✚ PROJECT STEPS

Step 1
Make the case

More time and resources for project management would be ideal, but the business case is difficult to make without credible data – which requires portfolio discipline. Ironically, establishing enough discipline to make the business case actually diminishes the need. "Minimum-viable" project and portfolio discipline is often good enough.

Step 2
Conduct a needs assessment

Methods and tactics gradually become ends in themselves when people forget the ultimate goals and purpose. Focus on the "why" behind project and portfolio management before determining "how."

Step 3
Establish standards for portfolio reporting

If you want more focus on the important work, you've got to manage the less important work. Emphasize reporting high-level project status as a way to identify and address issues to achieve the best results with the least effort.

Step 4
Customize toolkit

Developing a lean PM toolkit will free up PMs to focus on actually managing the project while still delivering accurate portfolio metrics. Don't fixate on project documentation at the expense of the project.
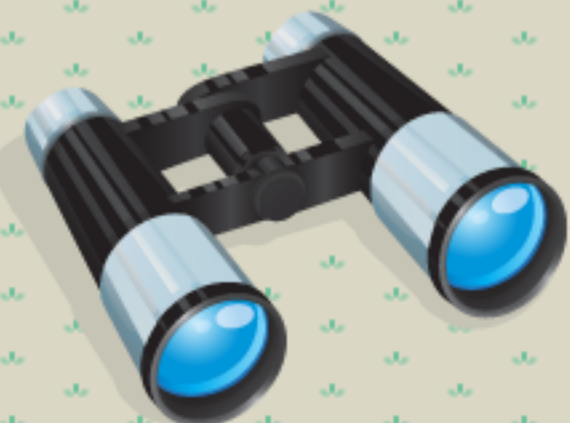
Step 5
Train project managers

The most viable and effective way to ensure project manager compliance with the portfolio reporting process is to incorporate activities that create value by helping them manage their projects.

Step 6
Measure value

Get real value from your project management strategy. Discover how redefining your means has benefited project success, portfolio visibility, and stakeholder satisfaction.