



What, No PMO?

How you can still manage projects like a pro.

Project management offices (also known as PMOs) are often a luxury of large organizations or complex ones that continuously execute projects as a part of their business. If you don't have an entire team of PMPs (also known as task masters and bad mamajamas), chances are you have a couple of operational leaders who divide their time between managing the day-to-day business and leading these temporary, yet complicated, endeavors known as projects.

You don't need a PMO to win at projects, but understanding the principles of project management and having an expert in your corner will increase your odds. Let's start at square one:

How to know when you are looking at a project:

- **It walks like a...** Projects are temporary and unique sets of work that have a specific outcome. They walk into the door via your business plan and they walk out the door when they are completed.
- **It talks like a...** Projects require a large group of people from cross-functional teams to effectively communicate and work together to introduce something new or make a significant improvement. Think meetings, briefings and status calls.
- **It must be a...** Projects involve hundreds of tasks and working hours that must be coordinated and managed to ensure the end-goal is reached. At a minimum you need a plan and a central location for communication. We don't recommend a clipboard; try something cloud-based like www.achieveit.com.
- **Until it isn't...** Projects are finite and once the project is complete, the new product, service or process that resulted becomes a normal part of your operations. That's right, for your company, the work never really ends.

The three critical measures of a project:

- **Time:** Like any SMART goal, you need to consider the amount of time you add (no, we don't mean the herb) for your project then layout the plan to get there. Complex projects may need to be divided into phases to create manageable time lines and avoid overlap of dependent tasks (tasks that cannot be started until the one before them is complete).
- **Budget:** Driving significant business improvements usually isn't free. The only thing your operational managers dislike more than running projects in their not-so-spare time is having all of the costs taken out of their not-so-big budgets. Create a separate pool of money for your projects - and toss in a little extra for donuts and coffee to keep your team motivated.
- **Scope:** We aren't talking about mouthwash here, but if the scope of your project isn't clear, it could leave a bad taste. The scope clearly defines what work is and isn't involved in your project. It is not a single question to answer, but an understanding you arrive at after asking yourself many questions. What is the desired outcome of this work? What are the major milestones you expect to achieve? How will you measure success?

What's so special about a project manager?

- **The right experience:** Project management professionals (PMP) have a mix of formal business education and numerous field hours of project management experience.
- **The right tools:** Project managers follow a “methodology” to ensure a project’s success -it’s like science without the beakers. Their toolbox is full of templates, from workbooks to meeting minutes and all the communications in between.
- **The best planners:** Before project managers dive into the work, they analyze the current situation and ensure you have the right plan of work to reach your desired outcome. Their work also doesn’t end when the project does. Project managers assess impact, identify transitional responsibilities, and throw a party. But seriously, project teams work hard and project managers make sure they are recognized and rewarded so they’ll stick around for the next one.

in-FUSE Your Solution:

No PMO? Still think thyme and Scope are things on your grocery list? You need to in-FUSE your organization with an expert to get your projects to the promised land. At in-FUSION Group, LLC, we have our very own PMP (project management professional, task master and bad mamajama) Erika Oliver. She has been whipping organizations into shape for over 14 years and bestowing upon them her knowledge of disciplined planning and change management. Erika works with you to plan and manage your projects and identifies the tools and resources you need to be successful when the time’s up.

Remember, if it walks like a project and talks like a project, you need a project manager. Before you lose valuable time and money by winging it, just call us. Pep talks are free of charge.

For even more information, check this stuff out:

Link strategy and execution with AchieveIt:
<http://www.achieveit.com/video-tour/>

See what it takes to be a project management guru:
<http://www.pmi.org>

Learn more about the happiest PMP on the planet:
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/erikakoliver>



Structure for Success

We’ve talked a bit about how to manage a single project, but what happens when you have a whole list of projects to tackle? This is usually the case when you reclassify the work under some other fancy corporate jargon - like “initiative” or “program.”

Be wary of going this route without creating a formal project management structure. Your project management office (PMO) need not break the bank. Having a small, but mighty, dedicated group of project ninjas will actually save you time and money in the long-term.

At the minimum, your PMO should consist of one experienced project management professional and a highly productive, super smart person from each critical business unit involved in your, ya know, “initiative.”

Remember, in-FUSION Group, LLC’s partners have decades of experience building new teams and restructuring existing resources. If we build it, great people will come.

{**Contact Us:** <http://www.in-fusiongroup.com> | info@in-fusiongroup.com | 877.224.2429}

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