

Communicating with Stakeholders - PM Tools & Techniques

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Context

- Perspectives from IT-PMO
- Communication challenges
 - Flat Org structure
 - Different types of Stakeholders
 - Communication needs / standards are assumed
- Levels of Communication
 - IT PMO level comx
 - Project level comx
- Building 'reliability' & 'consistency' are key

Challenges

- Dispersed communication methods
 - Email, Walk by, IM, SMS, Phone
- Informal networks trickle information
 - Many times these are faster than PM
- Key challenge for PM
 - Balance between promptness & quality of comx
- Follow ups are more difficult – overload

PMO Communication

- Standardizing communication methods & processes is a key pre-requisite for a successful PMO
 - Phased approach
 - Need to make teams see the benefits
- Usually faces resistance
- Trying to make one-size-fits-all creates friction

Phase one – Simple approach

Project Name: <input type="text"/>		Overall Status this week: On Schedule <input type="button" value="v"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>	
PM Name: <input type="text"/>		Priority: <input type="text"/>	
App Owners: <input type="text"/>			
Begin Date: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="calendar"/>	Current Go Live: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="calendar"/>	Baseline Go-live: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="calendar"/>	
Last Milestone completed: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>		Next Milestone: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>	
Date of last milestone: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="calendar"/>		Next Milestone Date: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="calendar"/>	
		Scope: <input type="text" value="As Approved"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>	
Completed Week: <hr/> <hr/>			
This week: <hr/> <hr/>			
New Decisions made: <hr/> <hr/>			

Approach & Challenges

- Focus on standardization
- Keep it simple
 - Simple 3 phase project lifecycle
- Aligning all depts – to one size
 - Building consensus, then enforcing
- Planting the seed
- Keep it agile to absorb changes
 - Technology should help not hinder
 - Low tech is good enough

Results

- Weekly standardized updates
- PMO becomes more organized & formal
- Central point of contact for all users
- Focus on facts
- Push back begins
 - Personality clashes / culture change
- Phase 1 should last 3 – 6 months

Phase 2 – Adapt & Enhance

Project Name: <input type="text"/>				Status this week: On Schedule <input type="text"/>		
PM Name: <input type="text"/>				Priority: <input type="text"/> Score: <input type="text"/>		
App Owners: <input type="text"/>				Scope: As Approved <input type="text"/>		
Begin	Concept	BRD	Design	SRS	Implmt Hrs	Go-Live
ITG	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Estimated	Baseline
Approval	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Completed	Actual
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Risks:						
<input type="text"/>						
Delays						
<input type="text"/>						

Approach & Challenges

- Focus shifted to Risks & Delays
- Expanded lifecycle into 7 phases
- Standardized but has room for custom needs
- Got anchored into Orgn culture
 - PMO updates as a must-have on Mondays

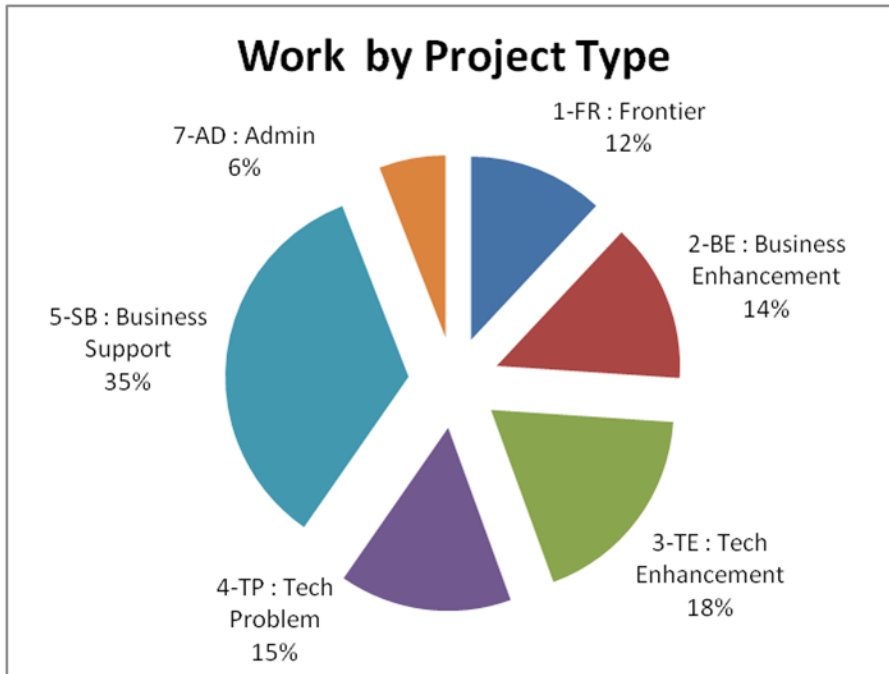
Challenges

- Considerable push back
- Need to slow down innovation to meet everyone's needs

Results

- PMO is front and center
- Business teams getting consistent updates
- High visibility
 - No skunk works projects
 - More collaborative
 - Broke down silos
- Higher Resource utilization
- Helped us move to the next step in PMO

Phase 3 – Balance demand & Capacity



- Standardizing IT Governance
- Portfolio wide metrics

Project level Communication

- Not all projects are created equal
- Stakeholder + Project charter + Timing
 - Together determine communication needs
- Understand the business ROI for every project
 - Determines information needs to anchor the ROI
- Understand stakeholders depth of involvement and understanding of IT
 - Had IT experience – provide tech details
 - No IT experience – translate into bus. terms

Project Communication –1st Half

- Establish a communication plan with stakeholders
 - Look up earlier project comx with this stakeholder
- Focus on issues
 - Talk in terms of ‘Impact on Operations’
- Always discuss – what it takes to resolve
 - Summarize - Use Root cause methods
- Evaluate Risk Appetite of Stakeholders
 - Higher risk appetite = Wants to make continuous tweaks to CTQS = Frequent comx

Project Communication – 2nd Half

- Focus on what is left and what it takes to complete
- Establish metrics for regular comx
 - (Ex. # of quality bugs, budget v/s actual cost, # of user support calls etc)
- Use graphs where possible
- Focus on the ‘Big Idea’ and if the project is in alignment with that

In Summary

PMO

- Evolution v/s Revolution
- Manual process first – Tools come later
- Silos can kill the PMO

Projects

- Continuously agile comx
- Translate everything into business impact
- Actionable info only
- Be a problem solver...what it takes

Recommendations

- Loyalty to Facts
 - Facts first, perception next
- Always factor project impact and risk appetite of stakeholders
- Watch for ‘Whats Hot’
- SPI, Burn-down Charts & Cost Overrun charts are critical for every PM
- Be bold - Ask for cheaper ways to solve the problem – Out of the box
- Flat org structures & ‘Leading outside the lines[®]’ will force you to dig into details