

PMO Enhancement: Onit Partner Helps Create High Performance Project Teams

Issue:

A start-up telecommunications company (“Acme”) had engaged a global networking infrastructure provider to build its nationwide new technology network from the ground up. This provider (“Alpha”) was struggling to meet the start-up customer’s expectations, as most of Alpha’s customers were mature communications concerns with mature processes and levels of administration that made agility unnecessary. Acme instead required the support of a dynamic organization to provide subject matter expertise. Acme was under tremendous performance pressure from its Wall Street investors, and was transferring this pressure to Alpha. Additionally, the challenges of the Acme project were eroding profit margins for Alpha. A new approach was necessary to enable Alpha to profitably meet Acme’s needs.

Strategy:

Onit Partner Edward Byers was assigned to affect a turnaround on Alpha’s engagement with Acme. He realized this would require improvements in Alpha’s project management discipline, delivery methodology, communications, and quality. His strategy was to create a more agile PMO, better able to serve a broader range of clients, including start-ups such as Acme whose needs were different to those of Alpha’s traditional customer base.

Solution:

Edward’s first task was to create a client-focused culture within Alpha’s PMO. This meant empowering Project Managers to act as customer advocates and encouraging regular dialogue between Project Managers and their clients to consistently monitor customer satisfaction. This helped PMO become aware of customer satisfaction issues at earlier stages of the process, before escalation took place.

Edward then focused on improving project discipline by establishing objective project performance metrics and accountability for deliverables via regular status reports, using tools such as Earned Value. This helped to establish an expectation of proactive task planning versus reactive behavior, and of proper risk management, analysis, and management.

With strong customer advocacy and project discipline in place, Edward could then align the project team around standard project management practices, skill sets, and techniques via formal training and certification.

Results:

Project performance improved measurably through use of project management software and recurring status reporting of objective project metrics. Project communications were enriched via the use of standard project documents, created in conjunction with the client and rolled out across the program. Project quality increased as a result of the implementation of project metrics (i.e. Earned Value) that were then measured and displayed. Engagement profitability for Alpha was enhanced due to more efficient and effective project execution.