THE TRANSFORMATION OF A GLOBAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE
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White Paper

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This paper chronicles the evolution of a Project Management Office (PMO) in the Global Information Technology (GIT) function of a large high technology company.

Following the acquisition of a major player in their market segment, the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and others began looking for someone on their staff that could take the existing PMO and transform it into a "World Class" organization. Given the history and many "legacy" issues facing the organization, this was to be no easy task.

An examination of the culture of the PMO indicated that while they employed many smart, talented people, there had been no consistent leadership and the organization had no solid identity, charter or brand. To many of their internal customers, the Project Managers were viewed as nothing more than administrative people who were there, not to manage the projects and add value to the business but rather to handle all the paperwork and do the bidding of whoever was senior in the internal customer's organization.

PMO Transformation

Rebuild The PMO?

A relatively young, talented man from the recently acquired company (we'll call him Mike) was selected to head the PMO and was tasked with rebuilding it into a force within GIT.

Now imagine just being acquired, not knowing much about your new company or any of the people and being handed a task of this magnitude. "Holy Smokes, What do we do now coach?????"

A little background on the individual selected for the job is likely useful at this point. He was in upper middle management (Senior Director), held an advanced college degree and worked in and around IT for ten years or more.

He was what we will call a **"Super Star Individual Contributor"** even though he held a management position.

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His style was to routinely take on more work than most, work incredibly long hours and produce high quality work under pressure.

Just the man for the job, right? Well, we'll see.

As luck would have it, just as the magnitude of the job he had accepted was hitting him, he received a notice form Human Resources that there was going to be an L3 Leadership Learning Program offered and that he could sign up if he wished. The program included 3 months of individual coaching which involved Mike's immediate manager as well as the input from his team and other colleagues.

Knowing he would need all the leadership skills he possessed, and more, to be successful in this major initiative and being new to the company, he thought "let's see if they'll put their money where their mouth is" and he registered for the program.

Somewhat to his surprise, it was approved (including travel to the location) and he was on his way.

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This is where our story really begins to get interesting.

During the course of the L3 Leadership Program Mike recognized that if he was going to be successful in his new endeavor, he would have to rethink how he would approach the work and how he would enlist the support of his team and others throughout GIT. He knew that being new in his position without benefit of existing relationships, he would have to "win over" many people who did not know him and likely didn't trust him. The old "command & control" method was definitely out.

Mike not only participated in this new Leadership Development program but also embraced the basic tenants of the embedded philosophy of the program. He instinctively knew that more of his people and others would also have to be brought on board. For his on-going development, he contracted with the Leadership Development firm for an additional 18 months of personal coaching.

As Mike's direct reports completed the program, they too expressed a desire to involve their directs (the Project Managers) in the process but this appeared to be cost prohibitive. Actually, the program design comprehends this requirement and a slimmed down version was implemented with the PM's, which included self assessments, feedback from their immediate manager, and telephone coaching.

Upon returning from his experience, he enlisted his entire team and scheduled them to attend the same program over the next few months.

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*Throughout the process,
Mike and his Glowan Leadership Coaches
continued developing his leadership skills
but more importantly, they realized
that much more than leadership
would be required to accomplish his goals.*

*What was going to be required was a
total transformation of the
"culture' of the PMO and eventually
all of GIT and beyond*

In addition to the L3 Leadership Learning Program, Mike called a Global Summit to involve his directs in the shaping of the vision of the future for the PMO. At the summit, the Leadership Development firm took the group through a formal "Branding" exercise during which they developed their Brand and their Brand Promise for their internal customers (Now referred to as Partners). Additionally, each participant developed his or her Personal Brand Statement that aligned with the new PMO Brand Promise.

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Aligning Individual &
Portfolio Teams
To Our Brand Promise

MANAGERS

LEADERS

PMO

PROJECT
MANAGERS

STAKE
HOLDERS

GLOBAL
PMO
LEADERSHIP
SUMMIT

PMO
BRAND
DEFINED

GLOBAL
PMO
Success
Through
Partnership

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21st Century Project Manager

Now the really difficult work began. One by one, the Project Managers and the Leadership Team Members set out to carry the PMO's new message to their Partners both inside and out side of GIT.
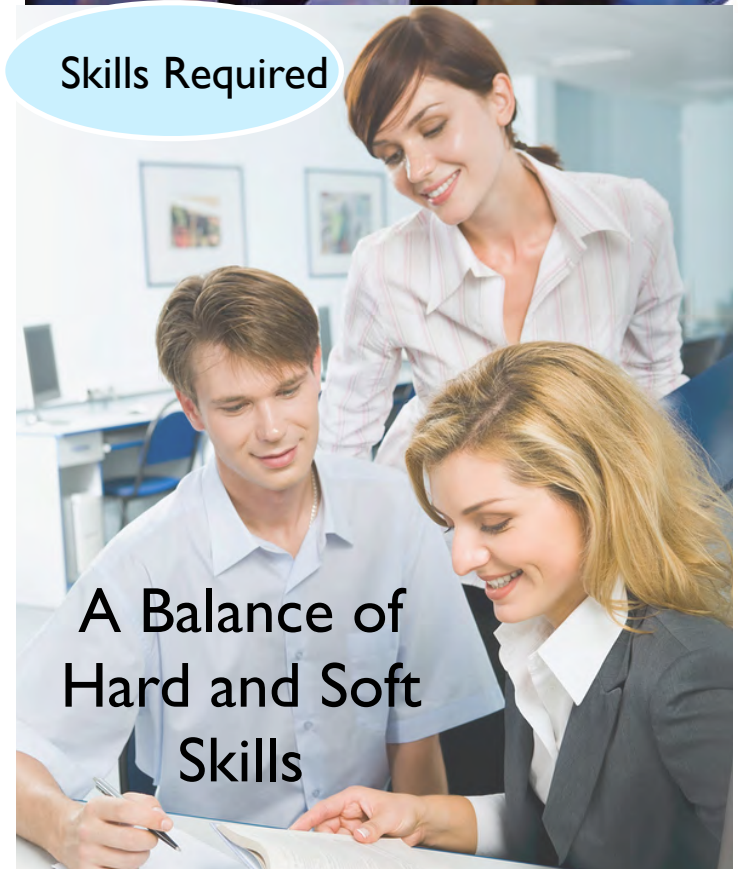
This turned out to be a much larger job than first imagined for not only did the team meet with the predictable resistance from many quarters but they also discovered that members of the team at all levels lacked many of the skills required to influence their colleagues, Partners and team members.
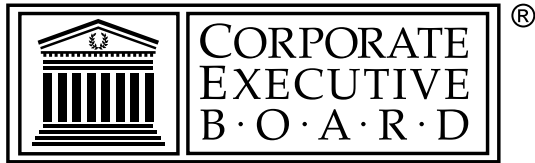
Around this same time, Mike attended a national meeting of the Project Management Institute (PMI) in which they highlighted the skill sets required for a 21st Century Project Manager.

In their presentations, they referenced some compelling research that suggested that the so-called "soft skills" or people skills were equally or even more important than the technical skills of a Project Manager. To become a truly world class Project Manager, one must possess a blend of technical skills and soft skills.

First with **People,**
First with **Results...**

Skills Required

A Balance of Hard and Soft Skills

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drivers for project management effectiveness are behavioral attributes such as emotional intelligence, influence, negotiating, communication and the ability to relate effectively with key stakeholders.

Upon his return, Mike contacted the Glowan Consulting Group who delivered the leadership learning and coaching services and engaged them in a dialog about what he had learned at the conference.

The result of that dialog was the design of a customized program to blend existing and updated technical skills with the soft skills. The ultimate outcome would be a series of Webinars with supporting materials and a reproducible process they could own and eventually deliver to their people with only consulting, and coaching advice from the the Glowan Consulting Group.

The combination of the L3 Leadership Learning Program and the new Smart Skills Webinar based blended skills program for all PMO members would serve as the foundation for the transformation of the organization. The ultimate goal was to create a culture that actually embraced and practiced the tenants and behaviors of a "Learning Organization".

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There's nothing "soft" about Smart Skills

The structure was to be a "Pilot" Program with a hand picked group of people followed by a possible redesign based on feedback from the participants. Ultimately the entire PMO would participate.

Knowing the inherent bias against the so-called "soft skills" vs. traditional technical skills, the consulting firm introduced "Smart Skills" to the group. Smart Skills comprehended the need for technical skills, people skills and leadership skills. A series of Webinars was designed with topics including Emotional Intelligence, Influencing With Integrity, Interest Based Negotiations, Effective Communications and the like.

During the Smart Skills pilot, much was learned about the level of knowledge and interest among the Pilot participants and the ability of the Leadership Team to coach and help develop the PM's.

Smart Skills

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

INFLUENCE WITH INTEGRITY

INTEREST BASED NEGOTIATION

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

LIFE, STRESS AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

HIGH LEVEL COMMUNICATION

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At the completion of the initial Pilot, a major redesign of the process was undertaken and a second Pilot was launched with a different group of people, both PM's and Leadership Team members. In this second Pilot, a "Peer Coaching" element was introduced to help the participants implement the learning from the Webinars where the new learning content was presented.

These Peer Coaching sessions were readily embraced and resulted in a much higher level of engagement by the participants. Additionally, some of the coaching load was removed from the Leadership Team members.

This second Pilot also helped identify a new level of skill and engagement required by the Leadership Team members in order to make the process viable.

Following the feedback sessions the process was again redesigned with greater emphasis placed on <u>"coaching training" for both the Leadership Team members and the Peer Coaches.</u>

Ensuring that these two critical components of the process were as well prepared as possible gave the overall program a far greater chance of being successful, PMO wide. The entire series was introduced to the PMO and delivery of regular programs commenced.

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In this phase and all through the process, more was learned about various skill deficits and the willingness, and in some cases, the lack of willingness to participate in the transformational process. Most people opted in and a few opted out but as Mike put it; "We need to get everyone on the bus. Those who can't or won't get onboard will have to leave and find someplace else to work that better matches their values and expectations. Those who continue to stand in front of the bus will likely be run over".

The results of the work performed by the Project Managers and their leadership team has resulted in a more professional, capable organization that operates from a core set of values and with a common charter. They have a Brand that the rest of GIT is beginning to fully appreciate and each individual's Personal Brand helps keep them aligned and engaged. The program continues with one of the many success factors being the number of people wanting to join the ranks of the PMO. These people appreciate the culture that has been created and embrace the values demonstrated by the group. They see a more dynamic, Partner focused organization that is fun to work in and adds significant value to the business.

Transformation of a Global Project Managment Office

PMO

MANAGERS

LEADERS

STAKE HOLDERS

PROJECT MANAGERS

Behavior

Learning

Performance

Coaching

Drivers

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PMO Transformation

The increased business value of the PMO to the organization has resulted in several promotions of key individuals, the on-going reorganization of the groups to remain aligned with the changes taking place in the company and the continuous modeling of a people based, collaborative culture that honors individual and team contribution.

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leadership

execution culture strategy

structure