

CASE STUDY

CONSULTING FIRM – Reintroduction of project methodology

COMPANY PROFILE

Our customer was a Boston-based global consulting firm that offers strategic expertise to organizations and governments world-wide. In addition to assisting customers with their endeavors, they had more than thirty internal IT projects that needed to be brought to fruition. These projects not only were routinely coming in late and over budget, key players – including functional managers - did not understand the fundamentals of project management. And 70-hour weeks to accomplish nothing but churn were commonplace.

BUSINESS SITUATION

Outside of a few key players, project management was not well-used at this organization. This is demonstrated by the fact that while some capabilities within the organization were higher on the maturity scale, the new project office had identified overall project maturity at being at about level 1.5. (Out of 5). This manifested itself in a lack of formal standards, processes or staff to constitute a project management discipline. Work was performed ad hoc, many projects were delivered over budget and late. Project management as a discipline was not taken seriously and was seen as something that could be, and was, performed by anyone. And the PMO, which tried and failed to roll out a large project, had been disbanded and thusly the discipline had been somewhat discredited.

JPS SOLUTION

In working with the new project office, we co-developed a presentation that supported their vision, based on their core PM methodology. The goal of the presentation was to raise IT's awareness of not only what project management as a discipline can provide but also what the project office could offer in terms of training and support in the short term and long term. The presentation was delivered in two four-hour sessions for two different IT groups, domestic and international. (A third one was delivered later in Europe). It included an overview of project management including understanding the project management life cycle, the importance of planning, reviewing the keys to successful estimating, and how to run a lessons learned session. We also identified common reasons why projects fail and preventative steps to take. Lastly we performed an exercise using the team's real projects to demonstrate the power of project management tools, in this case the Work Breakdown Structure.

RESULTS

Attendees felt that the time was well-spent as they better understood how the role of project management fit into their lives. A follow-up one year later with the Associate IT director revealed that there was demonstrated progress. In her words, "We're still moving forward and the functional managers are taking on more ownership of their projects and running them a lot better."



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