METHOD 1 2 3
empowering managers to succeed

Want to manage a *program of work*?

As you become more experienced managing projects, you will often be asked to manage an entire "program of work". This is usually more challenging than managing a single project, as you will have a greater budget, team and responsibilities than you had before.

To help you out, we've defined here the 4 steps to take when...

Managing a Program of Work

So what is a *Program*? Well, a simple definition is that it's a group of projects. But wait– there's more! The projects in a program will have been grouped together for a reason, which is typically that they contribute to the same objectives in the business strategy.

Also, programs may include operational work within their scope, which makes them different by their very nature.

So you've been asked to run a program to build a new retail complex which involves 3 construction projects and some general marketing activities. How do you do it? Here are some tips:

Review the Strategy

When kicking off your program of work, the first step is to review your company strategy and agree on the objectives that your program is responsible for delivering. This is important, as the objectives are what you use to peg your projects to. If you end up creating new projects that don't contribute to your specified objectives, then they should be excluded from your program of work!

Get support

To gain the support, funds and "mind share" of your executive team, complete a Business Case. This will help you to identify the benefits and costs of running the program, the risks you foresee and what it is that you need to make it a success. It will also help you get the funding you require, as your Business Case will justify the funding needed, by stating the benefits to be realized.

Start carefully

Now that you have the funding and support from management, you're ready to kickoff. Before launching into scoping your projects—instead define your overall program of work in depth first. Create a Program Charter setting out your vision, objectives, roadmap and deliverables. Then set up a Program Office and appoint the key members of your administration team.

Selection is critical

You're now ready to define your projects and other related work. Scope out each project carefully and make sure that the benefits delivered from all of your projects combined, deliver the goals stated in your Business Case. Selecting the *right projects* to deliver the *right benefits* is critical. Make sure you categorize, evaluate, select and prioritize your projects carefully.

It's all down to execution

Now kick off your projects in a logical order. Spread your program resources (people, time and money) evenly so you don't have resource constraints. Go for quick wins first. Schedule larger projects next, once you have momentum. Never schedule critical projects to take place at the end. To retain the buy-in of your Sponsor, make sure your projects deliver value early.

Control chaos

After your projects kick off, changes in the business often cause a level of chaos. Your projects change in scope, their budgets get constrained and resource shortages start occurring. How you react to these changes will determine your level of success as a Program Manager.

When this happens, step back and re-assess your program. Outside influences are often the cause and these are things that you alone can fix. Only in exceptional circumstances should you dive into the depths of the program itself and work alongside project managers and teams at the *micro* level. A good Program Manager will instead step back and make *macro* level changes to influence the success of the program.

We hope these tips help improve your program management success!

Next Steps...

✔ Use this kit of templates to run projects within a program.
✔ Use this methodology to improve your project success.

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