METHOD 1 2 3
empowering managers to succeed

At some point in your project career, you might need to set up a Project Office. Read this newsletter to learn about the various types of Project Offices and how to set one up...

Setting up a Project Office

1. What is a Project Office?

A Project Office is *a department responsible for improving project management within an organization*. It's a permanent department within an organization, not a temporary function. It's there to coordinate projects and ensure they have the right tools, standards, methodologies and templates needed to boost their chances of success.

2. Are there different types?

There are 3 types of Project Offices:

- **The *Supportive* Project Office.** This is the most common type of Project Office. Its purpose is to empower Project Managers and teams to deliver projects. It doesn't control or direct projects. Instead it *supports* projects by offering training, mentoring, administration and reporting.
- **The *Controlling* Project Office.** Supportive services may not be enough to put projects back on track. By offering *controlling* services (such as project reviews, audits and assessments), the Project Office can influence project delivery. It may also enforce project standards and processes to minimize project risk.
- **The *Directive* Project Office.** The least common, but sometimes most effective type of Project Office, is one that *directs* projects. Here, the Project Managers report to the Project Office, which is directly responsible for the success of each project. This helps to group the project work within an organization to being under one department-the Project Office.

3. Which type is suitable?

Read these tips to decide which type of Project Office is best

Tools for a Project Office

To set up and run a project office, you need 3 types of tools.

Templates
Provide your Project Managers with templates to help them complete project documents faster and more efficiently.

Methodology
Implement a Methodology for managing projects. The methodology helps guide your projects towards completion.

Software
Use software for the day-to-day planning, tracking and reporting of projects.

These 3 tools are critical to the success of your project office.

Template Tools

Project Managers in your organization will currently be using some form of templates for projects.

for you:

- If you're implementing a Project Office for the first time, then the "Supportive" model is best. It helps you add value to projects by offering reporting, training and monitoring services, without taking on the responsibility for the projects themselves.
- If you have an established Project Office and you want to ensure that projects are independently assessed, then the "Controlling" model is best. You can directly influence the success of projects, as well as implement best practices, standards and tools.
- If your organization has a small set of high risk projects at any one time, then usually the "Directive" model is best.

4. What are the responsibilities?

The Project Office is responsible for:

- Resolving common project problems;
- Implementing the right project tools;
- Monitoring and reporting on status; and
- Improving project success rates.

5. How do you set one up?

Take these 4 steps:

Project Office Initiation: Define the role of the Project Office, obtain clear sponsorship and document the Project Office Charter. Seek funding and appoint a Steering Committee to oversee the operation. Appoint staff, obtain a premise and install the office furniture, computer equipment and communications. Whew!

Project Office Planning: Then select the project software you need to run it. Procure and implement the tools in your Organization. Then create a detailed plan outlining the Project Office services you're going to perform (such as project reporting and auditing).

Project Office Execution: You're now ready to offer your supportive, controlling or directive services to project teams. This will include offering training, mentoring and support. It may also include reviews and assessments or the management of special projects directly.

Project Office Improvement: As it's an on-going operation, you need to constantly improve the level of service offered by your Project Office.

It's a lot of work, but if you take these steps to set up your Project Office then you will deliver more projects on time and

under budget.

[Project Management Templates.](#)

projects to use the same *software* tools.

They can then plan, track and report on projects in the same way.

[Project Software](#)

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