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Building Acceptance for the Healthcare PMO

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Why Establish a Project Management Office (PMO) for Healthcare Projects?

The health care industry is a continually evolving space. The spiraling costs of health care for Americans and the government is driving more advanced approaches to reducing costs and increasing revenues so the industry doesn't continue to drain the pockets of patients and the health care system. Some of these major advancements will be focused on business process and technology projects. However, regardless of government initiatives forcing change, health care decision makers are seeking solutions to strengthen the backbone of American health care. And, much of the adversity is coming from one simple question: How do health care organizations make these changes without failure?

These business process and technology projects will need critical risk assessment and streamlined integration in order to reduce transition strain. A standardized project management methodology will be the most efficient means of delivering projects on time and on budget. Implementing complex health care technologies in line with government regulations requires an enterprise-wide project management approach and, while the majority of health care providers and payers struggle to define more cost-efficient standards, the acceptance of the Project Management Office (PMO) is emerging as an essential need for ongoing project success.

Merely implementing new software products (that are rapidly developing on the market), in most cases, will not be enough to justify the implementation. The main goal of new systems is to reduce administrative strain and costs, but a disorganized project will often lead to failure and/or drain budgets before operational stages. In many cases, new systems need integration with current systems in order to realize their true benefits to the organization, which would be the reduction of administration, training and staffing expenses as well as more positive revenue cycles. These are only a few of the many challenges we will face in the next decade and will certainly see with Electronic Medical Records (EHR), Practice Management, CMS and billing system integrations. A highly functional PMO can eliminate much of the chaos in developing projects of this scale by establishing a primary resource for all projects within the enterprise.

The value of the PMO is apparent in the following factors:

- Manages all project leaders across the organization
- Schedules and monitors tasks and accountability
- Ensures all documentation is accurate and completed
- Maintains budget guidelines
- Works to deliver each project according to the established timelines
- Corrects any failures and seeks out solutions
- Single source reporting to key managers and stakeholders
- A centralized center of communications for all projects

All of these factors lie within the standard project life cycle (initiation, planning, execution and closure) and are the primary causes for project failure if not executed properly. In addition to an enterprise project management methodology, each project requires its own development process related to its dependencies and risks. A centralized PMO is the most effective means of ensuring each project's underlying path to delivery.

The Virtual PMO is a developing option and may be the most viable for the health care industry. Because project management is largely considered a 'cost center', the benefits of a Virtual PMO are becoming more profound. The Virtual PMO allows for a smaller team to deliver many projects with success by establishing an on-demand Project Management System (or Business Process Management (BPM) System). In this environment, key managers and stakeholders can rely on dashboard reporting and a centralized resource for all projects within the enterprise. Project Managers can deliver each project in a more efficient, timely manner, reducing reporting and administrative strain and costs.

As we can see here, the process of implementing many systems into one organization, prevalent with health care organizations, is much more complex than simply establishing standard Project Management principles. The PMO seeks to resolve issues, streamline all project processes and develop an organizational project management methodology. Acceptance of the PMO should not be unclear to any business relying on effective change management and frequently advancing business process and technology systems. For the health care industry, the PMO may provide the most reasonable solution to the issues it faces now and in the future.

About the Author:



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Monique Marlow is the founder and CEO of Pranagy Unlimited LLC. Ms. Marlow has over 15 years of project governance success with some of the nation's largest health care networks and businesses. Pranagy focuses on developing innovative project management resources and tools with a mission to improve project integrity and success rates, positively impacting the quality of health care systems nationwide.

For more information on establishing a PMO and a Virtual PMO, please visit [Pranagy](#). Click here to download the White Paper: [The Virtual PMO Path](#).