The Power of Enterprise-Wide Project Management

Dennis L. Bolles and Darrel G. Hubbard
AMACOM, 2007
$49.95 319 pages

Reviewed by Paul Harmon

Management is probably the most difficult subject that business process professionals face. It must be faced when a process improvement team is formed, and it must also be faced when the redesign improvement team looks at a process that needs to be improved. As often as not, processes are defective either as a result of poor management on the part of the individual responsible for the day-to-day execution of the process, or they are defective because of policies or decisions made by managers higher in the organization. There are limits on what you can do to improve the way employees assist customers if the company has a policy that is imposed on employees who work in a given process that prevents them from providing customers with information they consistently request.

The Power of Enterprise-Wide Project Management is one in a series of books about Project Management published in conjunction with the Project Management Institute (PMI). The PMI was established in 1969 and has, today, some 120,000 members from 135 countries. They have published a Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) and an Organizational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3). They hold annual conferences (The PMI Global Congress in North America and Europe) and offer training for managers who want to be certified. For more information on PMI, check their website: www.pmi.org

PMI distinguishes between Operations management and Project management. Operations managers run functional units on a day-to-day basis. Project managers run projects that last for a limited period of time, and they aim to achieve a well-defined goal. The PMI PMBOK defines six project management processes, including Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring, Controlling, and Closing. If you are interested in learning more about the specifics of the PMBOK, I recommend other books, including the *Fundamentals of Project Management* (3rd Ed) by James P. Louis (2007) and *Improving Your Project Management Skills* by Larry Richman (2006). Both are in the AMACOM series and both provide a good introduction to the basic concepts and best practices defined by the PMI.

The Power of Enterprise-Wide Project Management by Dennis L. Bolles and Darrel G. Hubbard is an advanced book and assumes a basic knowledge of the PMI PMBOK. The goal of this book is to argue that companies should seek to establish standard project management practices throughout their organizations. To accomplish this, most organizations would need to learn more and institutionalize their knowledge of project management. To assist in this the PMI has established a Project Management Maturity Model that describes an organization's evolutionary path in terms of four stages that echo the maturity work of SEI's CMMI model:

Stage 1	Standardized/Evolving
Stage 2	Defined/Emerging
Stage 3	Managed/Controlling
Stage 4	Optimized/Improving

Copyright © 2007 Business Process Trends. All Rights Reserved.

Actual Project Management Maturity is judged in terms of the acquisition of a number of capabilities in the following areas:

- Governance. Policies, charters, and organizational models are established for the business management of projects, programs, and portfolios.
- Standardization. Standardized project management processes are established.
- Capability. Education and training programs are established to provide employees with needed competencies.
- Execution. Business plans for the execution of projects are implemented.
- Maturity. Surveys to evaluate the overall sophistication of the businesses efforts.

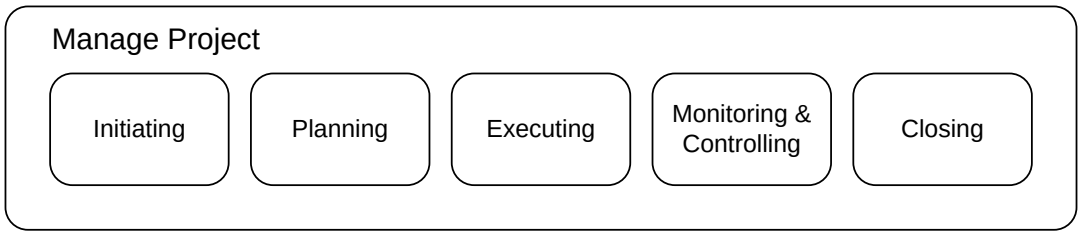
As with most maturity models, PMI's OPM3 has two aspects. It has an assessment capability that organizations can use to determine how they stand. At the same time, the stages and the descriptions of what capabilities an organization needs to acquire to mature constitutes a methodology for the improvement of the organization's project management skills.

The Power of Enterprise-Wide Project Management is organized around the five capabilities described above and considers each in detail, and describes how an organization should go about developing the capability. As the authors explain their goal, "This book is written primarily for *executives and senior managers* who recognize that project management is a business function and who want to establish project management as a core competency enterprise-wide within their organization."

To drive the organization's journey to mature project management practices, the authors recommend the establishment of an Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) that will coordinate project management efforts throughout the organization.

The aspect of all this that will probably interest readers of BPTrends the most is the concept of Project Management Processes. This is, of course, an idea found in SEI's CMMI model and something that finds its way into business process SCOR, VCOR, and COBIT. The basic idea, of course, is that there are standard, abstract processes that are instantiated in specific actual processes. Thus, for example, there is a process called Plan Project which a manager of a Software Development Project or the manager of a Marketing Campaign would need to use. Another user, of course, would be any individual charged with conducting a process redesign or improvement project.

In essence, this book, and, indeed, all of the work undertaken by PMI has aimed at defining the generic processes that project managers need to know how to execute. If we wanted to draw a very general diagram of the PMI project management process, it would look something like this:



Copyright © 2006 Business Process Trends. All Rights Reserved.

The PMI PMBOK goes on to define the knowledge and skills required to accomplish each of the processes or activities that fall in the Manage Project process. *The Power of Enterprise-Wide Project Management* goes beyond this and describes the kinds of decisions and institutions required of an organization that decided that it wanted to standardize on the PMI approach and train all their managers to follow this process when they undertook any specific project.
I read *The Power of Enterprise-Wide Project Management* with a certain fascination simply because I am well aware of all the alternatives being proposed by groups like SEI and the Supply Chain Council. Almost every author who has written, for example, on business process redesign or improvement has proposed a slightly different approach. Six Sigma's DMAIC, for example, advocates a slightly different approach. One wonders if an organization really would be better off if every project manager in the organization followed the steps and used the vocabulary proposed by PMI. Getting there would certainly be a struggle, since any enterprise effort to establish a standard approach to project management would have to deal with all the existing project management methodologies that are contained in the multitude of different methodologies in use in any large organization.

That said, one could make the same argument that the Supply Chain Council made for SCOR. Increasingly, companies are engaged in international processes (and in outsourcing, one might add) that require diverse groups to work together to coordinate their efforts. If individuals from different companies, cultures, and functional units are to work together, a common vocabulary would be efficient. There's a sense in which the company of the future is going to be an organization that can pull together a team quickly to accomplish a project, and then move on as circumstances change. A common aim and vocabulary would certainly seem to make that kind of approach more efficient and effective. If you believe this, then your organization ought to consider what would be involved in moving toward a standard project management process. And if you want to do that, then PMI has a widely accepted standard on offer.

The Power of Enterprise-Wide Project Management is hardly a fun read. It's a step-by-step introduction for managers who want to institutionalize a standard process for project management efforts undertaken within their organization. It's necessarily technical and more of a manual than a book you would read straight through. Given its nature, however, it is well written and provides lots of information about how to go about creating project management capabilities and institutions in your company.

This isn't the book for a process project manager who wants help managing his or her project. The other PMI books I listed earlier would serve those needs better. This is a book for someone interested in enterprise or business process architecture development who wants to see how others approach the problems involved in describing and standardizing business processes across an entire organization. I strongly recommend it for anyone attempting an architectural effort.

I also recommend it for anyone who is puzzling about how to deal with the abstract, standardized processes that are loosely termed "anagement processes." It may not offer the solution you will want at your organization, but it will make you think about your options and will probably give you some insights into the problems you face if you decide to standardize on management processes.

_____

Paul Harmon is the Executive Editor of Business Process Trends website. He can be reached at pharmon@bptrends.com

Copyright © 2006 Business Process Trends. All Rights Reserved.