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## Training and the PMO

Have you ever wondered who is grooming the next generation of Project Managers in your organisation? Are you frustrated that Project Management training is either lacking or failing to provide the positive impact your organisation needs? Have you ever questioned the value the PMO brings to your organisation's Project Management capability?

With the current crop of grey haired Project Managers preparing for retirement and the fast approaching onslaught of aspiring Generation Y Project Managers, who is going to ensure the ongoing development of Project Management capability and competency within organisations?

Whilst there are more Project Management courses available than ever before and a continuing growth in Project Management accreditation, organisational capability and competency is not necessarily growing. With Generation Y having a reputation for personal drive and ambition, the trend of individual growth is likely to continue independently of organisational development plans and structures. Independent individual growth may not necessarily deliver against organisational needs for overall competency development, nor will it enable the organisation to harness the inherent value of our next generation of Project Managers and channel it into effective organisational capability.

Over recent years much has been written about the role of the Project Management Office (PMO). Most indicate a general agreement that the PMO should be the organisation's custodian of methods and standards and almost as a consequence they should also be the Project Management centre for excellence. However, this raises a number of questions and challenges around ongoing development of competency and capability.

**Capability** – Depending on the mandate, model and functions of a particular PMO, the capability to mentor, coach and develop Project Managers may not necessarily reside within the PMO. As discussed in the article by Martin Vaughan, skills and development of PMO capability are different from those of PMO staff. The PMO is not always managed or staffed by people with deep specific Project Management experience, nor is that necessarily required.

**Capacity** – Often fighting for survival and continually looking to demonstrate immediate tangible value to the organisation, PMO resources are often focused on more immediate needs and don't always have the capacity to assume the responsibility for the development of Project Management capability.

**Mandate** – Our reviews of PMO’s and their mandates indicate that only rarely is the responsibility for the development of Project Managers formerly recognised in the PMO charter. It appears that whilst development of the organisations adopted methodology is often referred to, development of people often appears to be forgotten or assumed.

**Funding** – PMO funding models rarely include funding for capability development in people, with training funds often being held and utilised at the discretion of line managers.

**Positioning** - In addition to the above challenges it is clear that the best equipped people to offer coaching, mentoring and development of younger Project Managers are the Senior Project Managers, Program Managers and Program Directors within an organisation. However, their responsibility typically starts and ends with delivery of their program or project, often they have minimal involvement with the PMO.

Whilst these challenges are real, it is still possible for PMOs to overcome these and as a result exploit the opportunity to deliver ongoing value to their organisation. PMOs can and should lead the development of the next generation of Project Managers for their organisation by;

- Positioning themselves as the facilitator of Project Management development
- Assuming ownership of and thought leadership for the organisation’s Project Management competency standards.
- Publishing clear development pathways to enable formalised career planning for aspiring Project Managers.
- Facilitating a structured approach to development, coaching and mentoring through the engagement of senior Project Managers, Program Managers and directors.
- Fostering a culture of continuous Project Management improvement and development regardless of Project Managers reporting lines
- Sponsoring an internal Project Management community of interest and offer opportunities for Project Managers to network

**About the author**

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