The differences between **Project**, **Program**, **Portfolio** and **Product** Management

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Portfolio Management is doing the **right work**

Project Management is doing the **work right**

If project and program management is about delivering projects in the right way, then portfolio management is about choosing the right thing to work on. Company resources are limited, and demand often exceeds capacity. The decision process of choosing which projects to invest in, and which not to, is called **portfolio management**. Portfolios should be aligned to company Steam and CLT level goals. Project and program health can often be rolled up to give an overall view of portfolio health.

Portfolio Management is identifying, prioritizing and authorizing projects and programs to achieve specific business objectives.

Portfolio management is a centralized activity that identifies, prioritizes, and authorizes projects and programs based on alignment to business strategy and objectives. It organizes projects and programs to ensure scarce resources are being properly allocated in support of the goals and objectives of the business unit. This activity decides which projects and programs should be invested in, before they are approved to start.

How does portfolio management differ from project & program management?

Portfolio, program and project management are all aligned and driven by organizational strategies but each one contributes differently to the achievement of strategic goals.

|	Contributions to organizational goals
Project Management	Develops and implements plans to achieve a specific scope that is driven by the objectives of its program and, ultimately, organizational strategy. It is largely concerned with **achieving specific deliverables** that support specific organizational objectives.
Program Management	Harmonizes its project and program components, and manages their interdependencies in order to realize specified benefits. It focuses on **achieving the cost, schedule and performance objectives of the projects** within the program or portfolio.
Portfolio Management	Aligns with organizational strategies by selecting the right programs or projects, prioritizing the work, and providing the needed resources. **It balances conflicting demands between programs and projects,** allocates resources based on organizational priorities and capacity, and manages so as to achieve the benefits identified.

Product Management

Product Management is an organized approach to managing which products, features, or functionality is released to customers. Product management translates customer or user needs into products or features that can be developed, released and marketed. This often involves market and research analysis, business case development, feature design and development oversight, sales volume forecasts and tracking, and go-to-market activities.

It is not uncommon to have product managers decide what needs to be released, and then using Project or Program Management to deliver that release.

Thank you

You can discuss your learning and understanding in the Knet PM-CDF online community
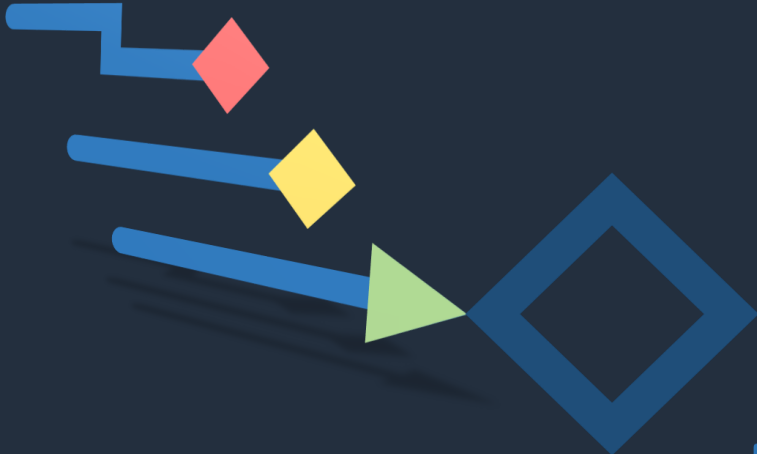
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Program Management
Competency Development Framework