

The Agile PMO - is it an oxymoron?

Published on October 7, 2015



Dr. Gail Ferreira, SPC4, CSP, ACC, PMP, LSSBB |
[Follow](#)

35 12 0

International Lean-Agile Transformation Practice Leader | ...

Recently, I was in a debate with some colleagues about the meaning of the Agile PMO. Some schools of thought believe that the PMO has no value in an Agile organization, while others believe that there is value to providing an overarching organizational model and structure for operations. Although in the past many organizations thought both concepts were diametrically opposed, more are needing to find a way to create new PMO structures that use an agile model to track key agile metrics, which results in

improved areas of traditional project risk management as organizations have the ability to track operations more efficiently using an Agile PMO model.

The traditional PMO helps organize operations at the strategic level (portfolio, program and project) in order to help track metrics and performance, as well as streamline operations. Conversely, larger enterprise companies who have already transformed to Agile are using methods such as SAFe to organize operations and provide structure for large enterprise organizations into buckets for portfolio, program and project with the same goal, to provide a mechanism for tracking value and allowing for nimble and fast execution.

So what is an Agile PMO? The principle is the same as the traditional PMO - to act as a centralized organizing body to help track metrics and improve operations. The Agile PMO acts as an aggregator and evaluator of Agile project data, including time to value, cost of value, velocity, burn rate and other project information that helps leaders track performance.

The difference between an Agile PMO and a traditional PMO is that organizations can quickly course correct based on data that is near real time in the Agile PMO, which improves risk and issue management processes, whereas a traditional PMO takes much longer to get the metrics from completed projects.

So how do you build an Agile PMO? The answer is that it depends on the organization. For a traditional organization that already has a PMO, you need to make adjustments to the existing model (generally at the organization structure and execution phase) to implement agile. For an agile organization without a PMO, you need to create one from scratch. In either case, you are creating a disruptive change to the organization (much like a transformation) which can act as a disruptor to the organization and need to

handle it accordingly.

Here are some suggested beginning steps to create an agile PMO:

1. Find a representative change model to help guide the organization through the disruptive transformation (Lewin, Kotter, Schneider are all examples)
2. Identify the key agile value metrics the organization wants to track (Time to Value, Cost of Value, Lead Time, Velocity) and map to each level. Keep focus on the portfolio area for the rollup, but consider each tier (Portfolio, Program, and Project) aggregating each one separately.
3. Set up your organization structure to envelop the agile team (Product Owner, Scrum Master and Team Members)
4. Identify automated portfolio, program and project management tools and tracking devices that can provide near real time data. Provide integration of data points at all levels.

Of course, there are many more details to setting up an Agile PMO, all dependent on building a model that best suits the organization as there is not a "one size fits all" approach. Careful assessment and evaluation of the current organizational people, processes and technical tools are necessary in order to create an optimal foundation that can help leaders manage large portfolios of initiatives for firms, tracking up to top level vision and strategy.



Dr. Gail Ferreira, SPC4, CSP, ACC, PMP, LSSBB
International Lean-Agile Transformation Practice Leader | Speaker | Author
[17 articles](#)

[Follow](#)

12 comments

Newest



[Sign in](#) to leave your comment



Kim Petersen, Ph.D(c)
Information Technology: Organizational, Product (SCRUM), Portfolio, Program, Project Management,...
Excellent insights here!! So there is a role for Agile PMO?
[Like](#) [Reply](#) | [1 Like](#) • [1 Reply](#)

1w



Dr. Gail Ferreira, SPC4, CSP, ACC, PMP, LSSBB
International Lean-Agile Transformation Practice Leader | Speaker | Author
Yes, would love to discuss with you along with your area of research.
[Like](#) [Reply](#) |

1w

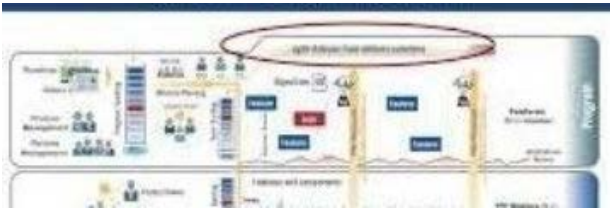


Arlene Carter
Services Delivery and Relationship Management Professional
Great article - need to know standardized methods to capture the metrics from #2.
[Like](#) [Reply](#) | [1 Like](#)

2y

There are 10 other comments. [Show more.](#)

Don't miss more articles by Dr. Gail Ferreira, SPC4, CSP, ACC, PMP, LSSBB



Value Streams Deconstructed: Finding Nuggets of Gold for Agile Release Trains

Dr. Gail Ferreira, SPC4, CSP, ACC, PMP, LSSBB on LinkedIn



Ubuntu for Agile Tribes: "I am what I am because of who we all are"

Dr. Gail Ferreira, SPC4, CSP, ACC, PMP, LSSBB on LinkedIn



The X-Team Factor: Using Externally Based Teams for Enterprise Agile Project Delivery

Dr. Gail Ferreira, SPC4, CSP, ACC, PMP, LSSBB on LinkedIn

Looking for more of the latest headlines on LinkedIn?

Discover more stories

[Sign up](#) | [Help Center](#) | [About](#) | [Careers](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Talent Solutions](#) | [Sales Solutions](#) | [Small Business](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Language](#) | [Online Learning](#)

[Search Jobs](#) | [Directories](#) | [Members](#) | [Pulse](#) | [Topics](#) | [Companies](#) | [Universities](#) | [Titles](#) | [ProFinder](#)

 © 2018 | [User Agreement](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Community Guidelines](#) | [Cookie Policy](#) | [Copyright Policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)