

PMO Flashmob: Inside PMO

PMO Managers Lunch Series



Beyond Timesheets: The Challenges and Realities of Resource Management

Spring 2017



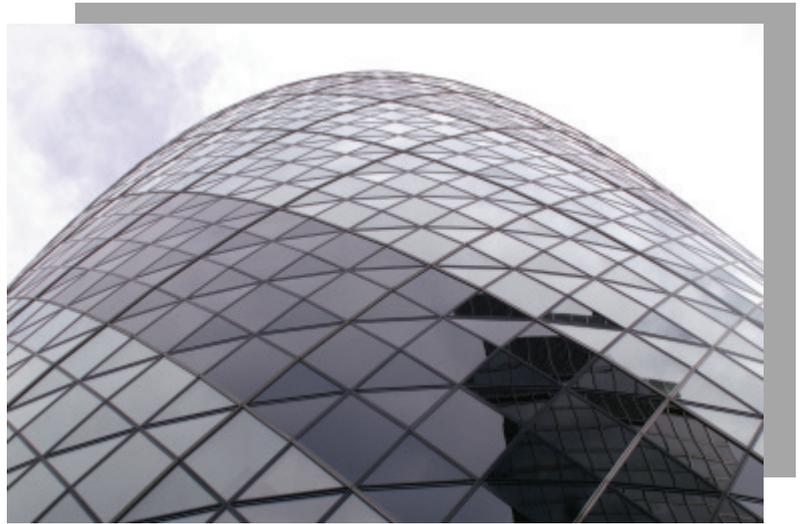


The Conclusions

1. The Circle of Resource Management describes the segments and components of resource management within delivery organisations.
2. Effective resource management across a delivery organisation requires implementation of one or more components from each segment.
3. There is no right or wrong place to break into the Circle of Resource Management - the business drivers are the key factors in determining where to start.
4. Business context and culture, along with the maturity of the delivery organisation are key factors to consider when choosing how to implement the components of resource management.



// It's like a huge melting pot of stuff, a huge circle which whatever way or where you start in that circle, it comes back to the same place"



PMO Flashmob: Inside PMO

Early July at the Gherkin in the City of London and PMO Flashmob - the PMO networking group - hosted the second 'PMO Managers' Lunch'. These events bring together PMO Managers, from a number of different industries, to talk in-depth about a particular PMO topic. At this lunch, the subject was **"Beyond Timesheets - The Challenges and Realities of Resource Management"**.

Resource management as a service area for PMOs has consistently presented a challenge. Recent research* has shown that it is the number one challenge today.

The PMO Manager's Lunch was held to explore three distinct areas that currently present a challenge:

1. Capacity Planning – cross organisation and cross divisional/department in terms of 'do we have enough people to do the work'
2. Allocation – down to a project level where we start to have named resources and all the fun and games of potential timesheeting issues that we do or don't have.
3. Skills and capabilities of the delivery teams and what the PMO can do in this area for example with competency models.

The biannual PMO Managers Lunch is a PMO Flashmob Plus event. With PMO Flashmob there are great conversations amongst different types of PMO people and this event gives us an opportunity to bring together leaders of PMOs - PMO Managers to discuss PMO topics that are relevant today.

It is an opportunity for PMO Managers to talk to other PMO Managers in different industries. We also wanted the opportunity to understand what is happening in PMOs today – PMOs in the real world.

We were also conscious that there is not a lot of PMO benchmarking available either formally or informally and this is an informal benchmarking opportunity which brings insights that others from within the PMO community can share and learn from.

This article provides those insights from the second PMO Managers Lunch held on 15th July 2016 in the City of London.

PMO Managers:

Gareth Lyon - Astra Zeneca
Mark Smith - BBC
Sam Holland - Carnival UK
Alastair Forbes - Network Rail
Peter Shirley - PA Consulting
Ian Finch - LGi
Assim Khokhar - MUFG Securities
Gerry Mulvihill - SSE
Emma White - Sanctuary Housing
Maria Jane McDaid – Network Rail
John Whitehead - Independent
Stuart Dixon - XL Catlin
Paul Major - Program Framework
Hosts: Lindsay Scott & Eileen Roden



Why is resource management one of the biggest challenges today for PMOs?

The three hour PMO Managers' Lunch covered various elements including the business context, the culture of the business and the maturity levels of PPM and PMO within the business. The report outlines all of these plus the components of resource management that should be in place and the capability of the people working on projects and programmes. As a way of introduction we asked each of our PMO Managers what were their current challenges in resource management today, a selection included:

- Providing effective resource management for about 1000 people.
- Developing strategic resource management in the organisation.
- Refreshing capability assessment models.
- Providing resource management and cost control.
- Creating capability assessments for the first time.
- Creating new standards for resource management.

There was an overall agreement that resource management presents a challenge today because of the number of components involved. This report highlights a number of the challenges and the thinking, experiences and courses of action being taken to address them.

“ Resource management wasn't something the management team had asked for – it was more an observation that access to the right people at the right time was a problem”

The PMO Managers around the lunch table represented different types of PMO models with different challenges.

Portfolio Office - more and more organisations are moving to portfolio management, however effective portfolio management cannot be achieved without some degree of resource management. Portfolio management is about the prioritisation of projects and programmes and forward planning – balancing which projects and programmes will be delivered now and in the future. The question is, can it be balanced without understanding the resource pool available?

Programme and Project Office - the simple model of supply and demand for current projects and programmes is still causing consternation.

The agenda for the lunch was relatively straightforward, we looked at three key areas which we believe covers the core resource management processes which a PMO is concerned with. These are:

1. Capacity Planning – cross organisation, cross divisional/department in terms of do we have enough people?
2. Allocation – at a project or programme level where we start to have named resources and all the fun and games of potential timesheeting issues that we do or don't have.
3. Skills and capabilities of the delivery teams – how is it assessed, for example with competency frameworks etc and developed in line with an appropriate career path?

The Circle of Resource Management

During the PMO Managers' Lunch a central theme was uncovered that helped join up the differing areas of discussion – something we've called the **Circle of Resource Management**.

This model comprises portfolio, project and resource segments, sitting with the business context and culture. This paper sets out the model, the components within each segment and the factors that affect successful resource management in project delivery organisations.



Introducing the Circle of Resource Management

The Circle of Resource Management highlights the three interdependent segments of resource management that represent the key challenges for our PMO Managers and demonstrate the conundrum of knowing where to start when it comes to implementing effective resource management in the organisation:



Resource Management is like a huge melting pot of stuff, a huge circle . . . whatever way or wherever you start in that circle, it comes back to the same place. The business wants to know what their resources are doing on projects currently being undertaken and what projects are on the horizon . . . we want to put those together in some kind of tool or system, build some processes and culture around it, so we can work out what it's going to cost us and when it needs to be done - in which case we can prioritise and see if we need to bring in resources, and if so, what is that going to cost us and how does that impact the prioritisation?"

The Circle of Resource Management has three interdependent segments. Each segment contains a further circle of components highlighting the services, activities and tasks required.

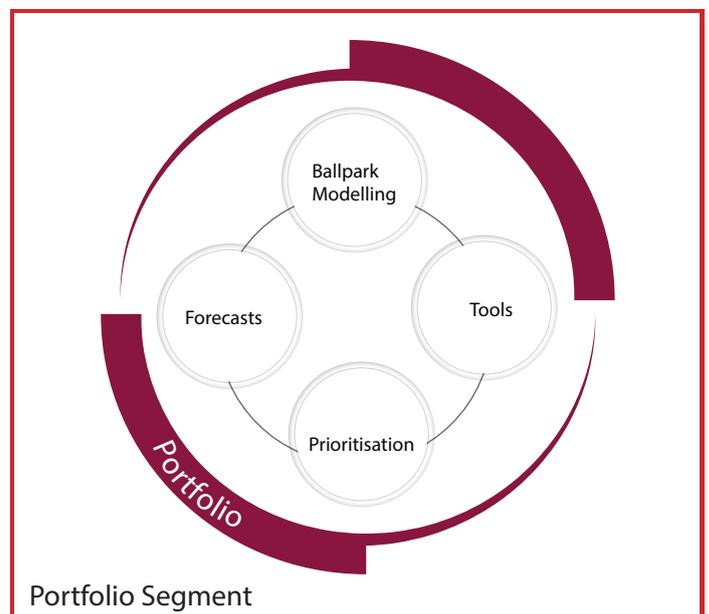
Our PMO Managers' experience has been that the drive to implement resource management in their organisations has stemmed from one of these segments, but which segment differs from organisation to organisation – and there is no right or wrong place for the PMO to start. However, the real challenge arises due to the interdependency between each of the segments.

The segments are:

The Portfolio Segment

The portfolio segment focuses on the more strategic side of resource management (the top down approach) - capacity planning – that allows right sizing the organisation to deliver the required projects and programmes within the portfolio, or limiting the portfolio to match the available capacity.

The portfolio segment includes components such as planning, modelling and forecasting, using appropriate portfolio level tools.



The Project Segment

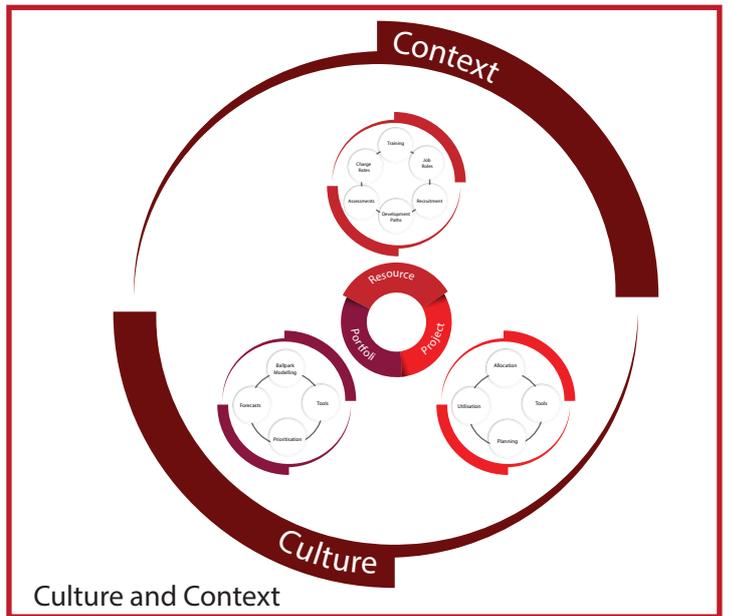
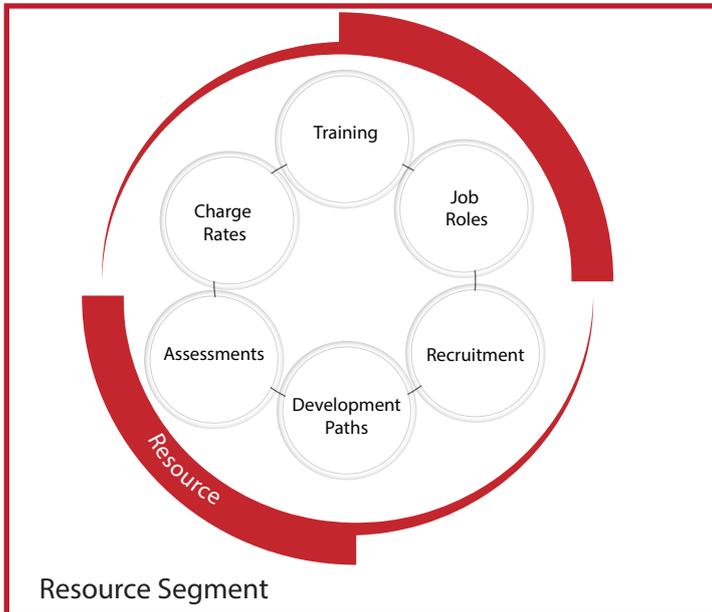
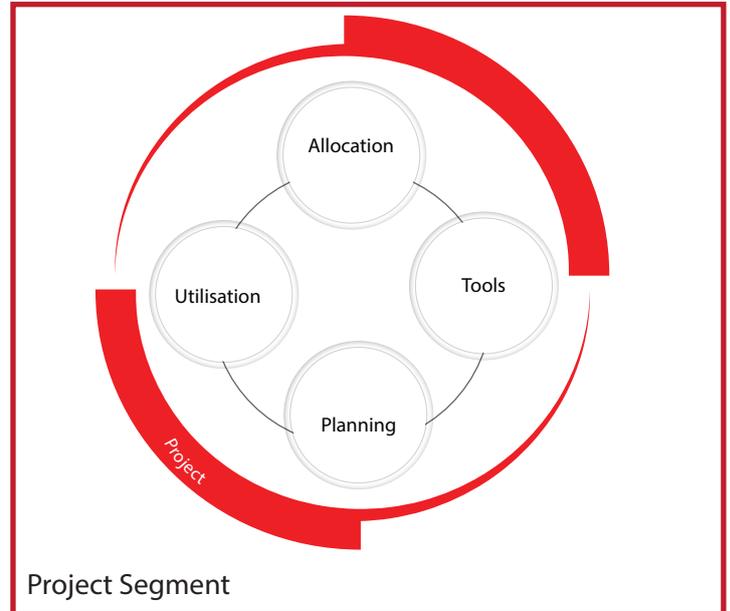
The project segment focuses on resource management activities at the project level (bottom up approach) – the allocation and usage of resources on individual projects and programmes.

The project segment includes components such as demand management, measurement and management of utilisation and project costing, again, using appropriate tools to support these activities.

The Resource Segment

The resource segment focuses on the skills and capabilities of individual resources that are used on projects and programmes.

The resource segment includes components such as role descriptions, capability assessment, training development and recruitment.



With the Circle of Resource Management there are also two further dimensions that affect the PMO’s decisions when choosing where in the resource management circle to start – these are the **business context and the culture of the organisation.**

The report covers more detail about the Circle of Resource Management and we start with the two areas that all the PMO Managers were in agreement with.

Where to start with resource management and the types of components needed, depends heavily on the culture and context.

“It comes back to what is it we are trying to achieve. Most of us would say that we’re trying to achieve some knowledge of what’s going on, who is doing what and when so we can improve and become more efficient.”

The Context and Culture Drivers

Business context and culture are huge drivers when it comes to implementing resource management within the project environment.

The PMO Managers believe that to implement resource management well, first they need to fully understand the business drivers for wanting to implement resource management and understand what it is that the organisation is hoping to achieve. This varies from gaining a clear picture of the demand and available supply, going further, to make improvements that will allow the organisation to get more out of the people that work on projects. This PMO Manager states:

“It comes back to what is it we are trying to achieve. Most of us would say that we’re trying to achieve some knowledge of what’s going on, who is doing what and when so we can improve and become more efficient.”

The PMO Managers highlighted different contextual and cultural drivers in play in their organisations, these included:

- Budget restraints – which effects the supply of resources against the demand.
- Internal versus external resources – the cultural differences between organisations who readily use external resources to ensure a steady supply and those that rely heavily on internal resources.
- Regulations – the demand generated in highly regulated industries can squeeze already stretched resources.
- Customers – where the customer is king, last minute demands can throw the resource supply into disarray.
- Mergers – combining resources, often of different capability levels.
- The types of projects – often the resource pool consists of a whole manner of different subject matter experts.
- The size of the organisation – a greater number of resources adds an extra layer of complexity to manage.
- The matrix environment – the model of using operational resources within projects and the conflicts on availability.
- The types of PMO in existence – the variety of control and governance structures.
- Who owns the resources – and who is accountable for their time? – which can lead to conflicts, unclear availability and inconsistent allocation processes.
- Agility – how quickly an organisation can respond to new opportunities or how self-organising teams can be.

“I think of it in the context of – what’s the business driver, what’s the business context and then what are the processes. So if the business driver is – I have these strategic opportunities and I’m not sure whether we can deliver them or not so I don’t know if we can achieve our strategic ambition. Then you look at business context – which can obviously change massively from organisation to organisation so for example, one organisation restrains their portfolio by cost. So these are the resources you have in your department, next we’ll work out of the cost of what you can afford to deliver which is different to the portfolio management approach of these are the projects, prioritise them and then schedule them into the available resource. When business drivers and context are understood then you can start to develop the processes and raise the maturity.”

The culture of the organisation also has a huge impact on the effectiveness of resource management.

Our PMO Managers talked about a number of different examples, including;

- Resources can be “quite scarce and internal bunfights can exist between projects about who gets what resource.”
- A “tendency for larger projects to get better resources than the smaller projects”.
- Having the right number of people available on paper, however they are already allocated in their own departments or divisions or are specialised in their own areas i.e., IT Project Managers, Digital Project Managers etc.
- Pet projects, which are driven by senior management, which pull in already scarce resources.
- Conversations about resource management just don’t happen – it’s almost like burying heads in the sand.
- Lack of accountability or at least one person having overall accountability for resource management.
- Working on international, cross culture projects – with different approaches to resource management.

Does Size of the Business Matter?

“Yes it does. It puts complexity in. It doesn’t matter if the resource pool is 2 people or 200 people, the process is the same – there is just more of it. More data input for example. The issues I have found at larger organisations is when you go above 1000 people – the churn of people leaving and coming into the business, changing skillsets and everything else is very painful. It’s being able to manage this churn around the people management side. Beyond that the process is the same.”

Maturity

Resource management starts with understanding what the main business driver is for wanting to start or improve resource management. Then understanding what specific, organisation context and culture factors will potentially affect resource management activities and then implementing the processes of resource management to make it happen.

But it's not that simple. There is one further context which has a massive bearing on successful resource management. The maturity of the organisation and specifically the maturity of the project organisation.

"When business drivers and context are fully understood, then you can start to develop the processes and raise the maturity."

The PMO Managers highlighted what maturity meant to their organisation and specifically to resource management:

- The maturity within projects and programmes – having effective resource management in place because they want to do more projects.
- Maturity of projects and programmes with the addition of portfolio management so they can answer bigger questions such as "how do we make change more predictable?"
- The maturity of the PMO itself, being able to provide the whole resource management process.
- The maturity of the resource management process itself.

The conversation about maturity invariably led to mention of maturity models, with P3M3 being mentioned the most because of its familiarity and resource management being one of the perspectives covered.

The PMO Managers talked about their own levels of maturity – choosing five levels – the same as the P3M3. The figure below shows the P3M3 levels plus the resource management maturity levels as described by our PMO Managers.

"Level one looks at resource utilisation, understanding what resources within the organisation are already working on. This is seen as the first step by many PMOs – and normally includes the use of timesheets. Level two then looks to resource capacity planning – understanding what programmes and projects will be kicked off and what resources will be required to complete the work. This stage is also about starting to understand resource capability. Level three is the stage where "what-if analysis" starts, getting smarter about scheduling future demand. Levels four and five are about peak resource management functions – capacity, capability and forecasting up to three years out is where these PMO Managers see an optimised resource management level."

Here a PMO Manager talks through their thoughts around maturity and resource management:

The portfolio is first, on one side - does the organisation know how many projects it needs to run and what outcomes it needs to achieve and then on the other side what projects and programmes will be implemented.

From a resource management point of view, from the top down, the organisation says, 'do we know how many people we have got in the organisation'. So Level One – how many resources are there.

Level Two – what are the resources doing, what are they booking their time to?

Level Three – do I understand the capability of these people?
Level Four - are we maximising the capability?

So the parts are - do we understand the portfolio of work – do we know the capability and the number of the people, working on the right projects, to deliver that work.

What is P3M3?

P3M3 is the Portfolio, Programme and Project Management Maturity Model. It provides a framework for organisations to assess and benchmark their current performance and effectively develop plans for improvement. The model has seven perspectives, including resource management and has five levels of maturity. It is available from AXELOS



Maturity

The PMO Managers have also tackled maturity at a project level in order to ensure resource management is carried out effectively which in turn will enable the organisation to carry out more projects as the delivery organisation matures.

The conversation turned to classification of projects – the first, a simple ABC model:

- C are complex projects
- B are the complicated projects but we've done these before
- A are the cookie cutter type.

The PMO Manager uses this model to understand how many of each category of projects the organisation will have and what kinds of people will be needed to deliver those projects. "So clearly we need more sophisticated and experienced project/programme managers which are benefits driven for those C type complex projects, the technical specialists for the B type and maybe we need more project managers and PMO for the A type projects." Maturity for them is trying to looking at this from a capacity point of view, a top down approach to resource management.

"We have something similar – rather than A, B, C we categorise by type of project so 'business project', 'regulatory project', 'really big complex stuff' etc. From a top down we work out where we're going over the next year/18 months and then switch and start looking at the bottom up. Then we realised we didn't know how many change people we had, what their job titles were etc. There were a lot of hybrid roles between business as usual and change so there were business expert project managers. From a cost point of view we also couldn't control the two cost bases. So the first thing we did was put a big solid black line around the change so we could say we could spend X on a certain amount of change and then start prioritising against the strategy plans and then start building the skills profiles."

Maturity is also needed in the resource management processes – without processes, resource management cannot become 'repeatable' (Level Two in P3M3):

"We moved from a maturity of about point something (if that exists!) to something like 2.5. We had put in place methods, processes, standardised things like the governance, got people trained and then worked with them very hard over that year to get things embedded and then just continued doing that and improving the maturity."

As part of the process conversation, tools were also mentioned – which linked us back to the delivery organisation culture:

"I don't think you can whack in a great big tool – I think it's a five year plan where you're bringing up the maturity of the culture, the tools, the processes – it all needs to be done together."

Should the PMO be at a certain maturity level, recognition, position in the organisation in order to break into the circle?

You have to have a certain level of maturity in the PMO otherwise you wouldn't be in a position to provide certain levels of resource management.



"We're using resource management as a springboard to increasing our maturity. We work with our project managers to help us to provide the justification for good resource management. They complete the timesheets, follow that process and we can then highlight further up the chain where the supply and demand are not working. Now when work is coming in and the PMO says we need a business case for that from the project managers, they don't blink, it gets done- they trust us as a function. We had a lot of support from senior management because yes, they wanted to know what people were doing – but we've found that it supports and helps people as well as getting buy in for the PMO as a much needed function."



The PMO Conference



Focused on portfolio, programme and project offices, this one day conference is all about learning more about your chosen profession. From a full programme of PMO expert speakers, a dedicated PMO exhibition full of PMO products and services and time to network with new PMO contacts or reconnect with friends and ex-colleagues,

the day is 100% PMO focused.

PMO
Conference
London
2017

Wednesday 7th June, 2017
www.pmoconference.co.uk

Spotlight on Timesheets

Timesheets were mentioned frequently throughout the PMO Managers Lunch as forming part of the processes at Level One maturity. The subject divided the lunch table.

For many PMOs, resource management activities focus on the utilisation of resources working on projects and the process of allocating time spent on activities through timesheets. Timesheets have long been regarded one of the easiest places to start in the resource management circle, however is it the right thing to do?

Timesheets and utilisation reporting was considered by many of the group to be level one maturity in resource management activities yet the reasons for doing them may be misguided and in some cases harmful to the delivery organisation, as one PMO Manager said, “In our organisation, timesheets are seen as a bit of a dirty word”.

On the other hand, timesheets do have their wider benefits and if an organisation wants to get to utopia in resource management, timesheets will have a part to play. We take a look at both sides of the timesheet argument.

At its basic, recording of time spent on projects enables the PMO to provide backwards looking data in respect of who is in the resource pool and what they have spent their time doing.

Often the need for timesheets has been driven by the need to cross charge time internally; give senior managers a view of what people are working on and provide actual costs for project P&Ls.

The PMO Managers here argue that the timesheet process is labour intensive; it drives a set of unwanted behaviours in the people required to complete them; it is difficult to introduce timesheets in certain cultures and often the information is not actually used by the business – it doesn’t drive any decision-making or forward planning.

One PMO Manager argues the case for timesheets being a useful tool to help change the culture:

We have been able to say, “we spent XX this quarter – does that seem right to you? Should we be doing that?” And over the last 6 months we’ve changed because of that. We’ve sold back the value of what we’re doing with resource management.

The result here brings us back to the culture and context of the business – what the business drivers are for putting in place processes like timesheets. Often there are different views on why utilisation data is important.

However the key to this is – is the business prepared to make decisions based on the data it receives? In a lot of cases data like this is ignored which can lead to reporting on figures just for the sake of it, rather than it changing any behaviours. When the data goes unused it makes sense that the PMO would stop providing it.

However, proactive PMOs use this data to help direct their organisations, for example, facilitating discussions with Project Managers, Resource Managers and senior executives about what this data means and how improvements can be made.

Another benefit PMO Managers see is the ability to use timesheets for forecasting – they use them as a verification process of looking at actual time booked versus the original forecast and work with project managers to increase the accuracy of their future forecasts. They also use previous project data to challenge where similar current projects may have inaccurate forecasts. Again, the role the PMO takes depends on what the business drivers are – accuracies in forecasts are not the main drivers for a lot of businesses.

Timesheets have gained their ‘dirty word’ reputation mainly down to two things – a perceived pointless exercise by many who work on projects and the fact that timesheet entries drive certain behaviours which often means the records are inaccurate anyway.

“You’re working long hours, now the timesheets will show that, so now we can start to do something to change that”

One PMO Manager talking about the cultural impact of timesheets



Spotlight on Timesheets

A PMO Manager gives an example of people allocating their time to smaller projects because these projects were not part of a formal approval process – anyone in effect could book their time there.

Another PMO Manager talked about the blocks of time that should be allocated – are we interested in 15 minute blocks of time? And the issue with the ‘professional day’, do people really only work the 7.5 hours they are contracted to do – or do they book actual time worked? The real costs of resources are not uncovered.

The question of industry rates for utilisation figures on projects was raised – what is the accepted norm? A few examples were offered which included; 12 days out of a possible 20 days; 80% of available work time in a month; between 20 and 40 minutes a day is written off, the rest for projects or BAU work; 85% in a consulting environment.

Industry standards only appear to exist for services and consulting organisations – for other industries it seems to depend on culture and context once again.

It comes back to what is it we are trying to achieve. Most of us would say that we’re trying to achieve some knowledge of what’s going on, who is doing what and when so we can improve and become more efficient.

An alternative view about the usefulness of timesheets was offered – that timesheets can effectively help performance and motivation of people working in project environments – but only if timesheets are completed accurately. The timesheets can help to:

- Drive changes in the work people do – if allocated to many different projects and tasks, the constant switching leads to inefficiencies in work performance and an individual’s sense of belonging to the team
- Drive changes in the work environment and culture – recognising that projects have peaks and troughs – that elongated time of either affects motivation and health of teams and individuals.

The questions come back to the business context and drivers again and again – what is it we’re really trying to achieve with timesheets? And what is the effort / value pay off with the timesheeting process.

Skills and Capability

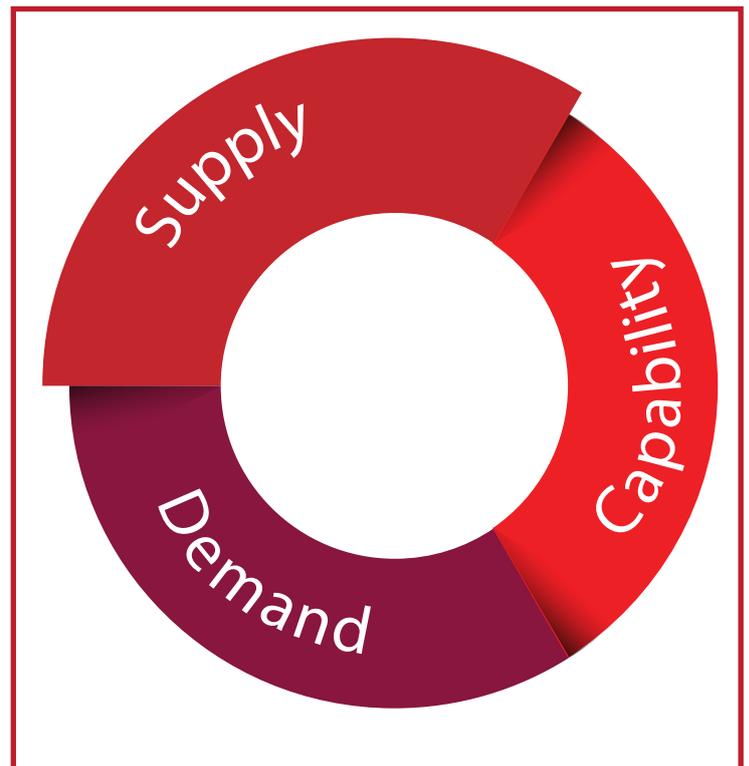
Resource management also includes the skills and capabilities of the delivery teams giving the third segment in which we can consider supply and demand and helping to answer such questions as ‘are the resources in the right place and have the right skills to do the job?’

The PMO Managers talked about their approach to the whole competency framework; assessments; career paths and learning and development practices they have in place.

The approach seems to be consistent across different types of organisations with flexible and adaption depending on the size of the resource pool and the organisation’s culture.

The approach includes:

- Creating job families across the delivery organisation for individual roles
- Deciding on the associated skillsets required for the roles
- Developing career paths and progression routes with standards and assessments.
- The creation of a capability/competency assessment framework
- The process of assessing resource capability based on the competency framework
- Creation of learning and development plans.
- Creation of coaching and mentoring programmes.



Within each of these steps there are many challenges encountered, and the PMO Managers shared their insights into what steps were taken to overcome them.

Multiple and Misleading Job Titles

A common problem seems to be that there are too many job titles in organisations which makes the first step of creating job families a headache. In one example, there were 160 different titles for 'project manager' alone e.g., 'Agile Project Manager', 'Workflow Manager'.

Initial work was about normalising that to a reasonable level, creating job descriptions before creating roles within the competency framework.

Making it Clear What the Assessment is for

Assessments can sometimes cause certain suspicions which drive negative behaviours. The PMO Managers being conscious of this ensured that their approach included lots of face time with Project Managers and the teams being assessed.

They focused on the 'skills uplift' angle; creating a space for discussion and conversations; being clear about what the outcomes from the assessment were used for (primarily learning opportunities, recognition and the ability for resources to move from one role or project to another).

Mentoring and Coaching

Mentoring and coaching was used as an example as an alternative to training courses. One system offered included: "In a previous role the organisation used Bronze, Silver and Gold project managers and one of the things that a Silver PM could do was to manage projects of a certain size but you had to mentor a Bronze PM as well and if you were a Gold PM you ran programmes and mentored Silver PMs. If you didn't mentor them you could drop down a level. The whole point was it was about a cultural thing about getting good project managers to help improve others. It's a good measurement – show me the people that you've mentored!"

I think there is a real opportunity here for the PMO to work with different people and different departments in the business, especially with those departments where resources are working on projects – even if it is only some of the time. We want to get good people on projects so how does the PMO work with these different areas to resource people based on their own development plans and of course their competency levels.

Mentoring and coaching is also an option for those working within the PMO. One PMO Manager shared their experiences around the PMO taking on small, repetitive projects (where a Project Manager isn't available) as a development opportunity. The wider benefits or outcomes have been that the Project Co-ordinator has been given an opportunity to increase their visibility with the delivery organisation and gained respect and recognition from Project Managers which was previously lacking.

Should the PMO Own the Training Budget?

A mixed response from the PMO Managers – in some cases a resounding yes – in others, it's a question of "what problem are we trying to fix if we did own it?"

The discussion focused around the question of, 'in what circumstances would it be beneficial for the PMO to hold the training budget?'

Responses included:

- When the PMO is responsible for the capability development of the project managers.
- When the PMO is in charge or control of performance levels.
- When the PMO carries out training needs analysis.
- When the PMO is responsible for ALL the resource management processes.
- When the PMO is trained and competent in learning and development theory and professionalism.
- When the PMO has reached a certain level of maturity or is deemed to be a subject matter expert in capability and competency in project management.

Adapting Existing Competency Frameworks

For some organisations, not reinventing the wheel when it comes to creating competency frameworks, was the way forward. The APM Competency Framework was mentioned a few times, with adaptations to consolidate certain competencies leading to a reduction of competencies to be assessed and measured.

The process of self-assessment and then line manager review seems to be a standard approach when using the framework. Others also include a peer review step.

Training Required in Assessments

It doesn't matter who in the organisation is responsible for the assessments – line managers, resource managers or the PMO – but they must be trained.

Develop the Competency Framework in Line with Learning Opportunities

As the competency framework is being developed, attention must be paid to the learning and development opportunities which will invariably result from the skills gaps from the assessment.

If competencies are being chosen in the framework that are specific to the roles and the organisation, the learning options must also be developed in line. Assumptions shouldn't just be made that 'some kind of training will be available from somewhere', especially in the behavioural competencies which are not necessarily available off the shelf from training providers.

We don't call it training, we call it learning – to get people away from this "you have to go on a training course". It's also about making it personal to them – they own that learning. It's about taking their own responsibility.

Future Areas of Development

We asked the PMO Managers – what have you yet to solve – what do you have left to crack in resource management? Here is a collection of responses from the group:

It's about dealing with an uncertain future – how do you upskill or get the capabilities right across the change and BAU environment, especially in a post Brexit, regulatory environment, where you don't know what is going to happen.

Can you get the consistency of a resource management model – that can flex up and down depending on the business demands – and the permanent/ contract resources? Resource models change but is there a minimum level of consistency that can take in different resource demands at any one point of time.

One of the problems – the speed of change is massive. Richard Pharro said an interesting thing that “change has never been so fast, but it's never going to be this slow again.” It makes you wonder how much more dynamic our resource management processes will have to be, both in the resource allocation and the constantly changing resourcing model we use, and the capabilities to support it.

It's also about learning – how long it takes to take a resource from being new and green to being a highly experienced and skilled individual – we're talking probably 5 to 8 years and that's with some really good interventions like putting people on the right projects and into the right environment to gain the skills, when after 8 years they're no longer needed anymore because they don't have the right skills. It is getting the right dynamic – the right person with the right skills for what's coming down the line in the future. How do I set sail in the right direction? That's what I'm looking to crack – what skills we need tomorrow and how I give the business that direction.

We need to be getting the right capability in the door first thing – we need to be doing that better so we're developing the right people from the start. Getting the people that are fit for purpose.

What is needed is a P3O competency assessment for people working in PMO – at the different levels or types (portfolio, programme and project) and then again for roles across portfolio, programme and project. At the moment it's just PM competency assessments.

The PMO Managers Lunch on resource management was about bringing together practitioners who are dealing with the everyday challenges within their organisations.

What was clear from the session was that resource management is still considered a difficult service to provide and support – mainly due to the analytical and emotive challenges involved.

Each PMO Manager had a different story and approach to tell – but each had stepped into the circle of resource management from a different segment.

Their decision was based on the context and culture of the organisation they work within; the business drivers for resource management ; the skills and experience of those within the PMO and in many cases, the areas which were deemed to be the easiest to make an impact.

Rage Against the Machine said it well in Guerrilla Radio “It has to start somewhere. It has to start sometime. What better place than here, what better time than now?”



The Questions Which Need Answers

The following questions were used as prompts throughout the three hour session.

Initiation ? What/who drove the requirement for resource management? ? What constraints/ timescales were given? ? What was the original scope of the work? ? Is there any link to operational resource management?	
Capacity Planning ? What resources are planned? ? What is the planning horizon? ? Is capacity a key input into portfolio selection?	? Who are the key stakeholders? ? What are the pre-requisites (including skills within the PMO)? ? What level of detail is required? ? What time boxes are used? ? Is there a different process for programmes and projects? ? What validation/assurance is undertaken? ? How often are the plans reviewed? ? What were the greatest challenges? ? What are the legal/ cultural issues? ? What systems do you use? ? At what point did you introduce systems? ? Do you treat permanent and contract staff the same? ? Has it driven up the quality of plans? ? Has it changed the culture of the organisation?
Project Allocation ? Do the PMO get involved in allocation of people to projects? ? At what point is the allocation 'committed'? ? Are timesheets used? ? Is time costed?	
Task Allocation ? Do the PMO get involved in allocation of tasks to individuals?	
Skills Management ? Do you have a competency framework? ? How was it developed? ? How do people keep their records up to date? ? How is it used? ? What impact does priority have on resource allocation? ? Are training needs tied into capacity planning?	
Measures of Success ? How do you measure success? ? Who cares about your measures/ who do you report them to? ? Is resource management seen to be a business critical function? ? How much does it cost and is it worth it?	
Outstanding Challenges ? Is it self-sustaining? Is there an ongoing role for the PMO? What value does the PMO bring? ? What are your persistent problems? ? What is left to do? ? What are the barriers do you still need to overcome?	



About PMO Flashmob

PMO Flashmob is a networking and learning group dedicated to people who work within the field of PMO (Portfolio, Programme and Project Management Offices)

Networking events take place in various locations in the UK. We host both social gatherings and more structured learning events called PMO Mini-Masterclasses.

PMO Flashmob was created in 2013 and continues to support and champion the PMO community.

For more information on PMO Flashmob visit: www.pmoflashmob.org

