



Project planning for the Future Using History Tool around planning

Table Discussion Led by David Rodgers

David's main passion is the strategic and 'value add' of PMOs and has been doing PMO work for nearly 7 years, contracting for the last 5. During this time he has worked at Egg Bank, Vodafone and is currently at Nationwide.

The session discusses a planning optimisation tool which gives guidance on how long certain phases of projects should realistically be, based on historic data of similar projects.



The discussion kicked off with a round the table view to understand what sort of environment people are in to find out whether they will find it useful

Questions raised for delegates to ask themselves included; How does a project find its way to becoming an actual project from an idea? Does it have to go through strategy, storyboard finance or funding board? How does it get to this point?

How do these projects then fit into the overall portfolio of the larger projects? Do you know logistics of projects (How big/small they are) when they are at an idea stage or is that something you are given after and it is just guess work? Answers from around the table briefly included; normally given an outline/normally do a one page brief/cost – then if resources available – can be linear delivery / communications - linkages



Where I was going with how things 'kick off' in your place – relates to an idea that was put together with Vodafone – they have quite a large planning portfolio about stuff that's happening and also stuff that needs to happen – constant pipe of change but for the portfolio planners they want to know – the project that's just been approved at your steering board – they want to know roughly how long it is how big it is and generically they will put it into their plan. What they really want to know is – because there is so much to plan – how big it is. It is always about how long and the complexity. The background of this tool was to work out averages of how many resources, how much money it is going to cost and what level of change it involves – systems and people it will impact.

We looked at a section of projects that were finished and then went through and took their durations – gated process – project lifestyle – concept. Ideas – 1-2 the scope and design of the product 2-3 and the developing and tests 3-4 then the go live dates etc. The more projects you use the better the averages.

View the tool which accompanies this session

Flat Line average – a tool which David has used... the tool was used to look at the complexity of a project to get pessimistic and optimistic view... the bigger the complexity the longer it is going to take to get through all the gates – a realistic

L1 6-8 wks - Scoping the projects

L2 81 wks – Design, develop, test

L3 108 wks - Deliver

The larger the change the slower it is going to take

Looking at data from previous projects means we now have data which can be applied – data is valuable – because we can use data from smaller projects then predict how long projects are going to take based on what we know previously.

Took it a step further – the **optimistic and realistic charts (in the accompanying tool)** If levels are taking longer we need to explain why and at portfolio levels we can answer these questions. Looking at the possible risks – if planning is out – explanations can be given for timeframes.

This tool helps putting together a business plan and shows the nature of change and also helps bring up questions on timescales to ensure all parties are on the same page. The tool becomes redundant when the project moves baseline and moves forward... by Level 3 you can come back to it and evaluate forecasting.