

TYPICAL CASE STUDY: DRAMATIC UPLIFT IN THE CAPABILITY OF PROJECT MANAGERS ACROSS A LARGE ENERGY FIRM



Situation:

A large energy firm was staring down the barrel of a several hundred million dollar transformation. The ability of its pool of project managers, and its overall approach to project management across the organisation was highly variable, with a lean towards low skill levels. Due to the firm's remote location, the local talent pool to select from was slim. The firm had to work with what they had. There was a large concern that most of the transformation budget would be mismanaged away.

Our Approach:

Working with a newly established enterprise portfolio office, we undertook an en masse project management uplift program. This was conducted over two phases:

- 1) Targeted Engagement & Uplift
- 2) Reinforce & Mentor

Phase 1: Uplift

The first phase started with interviews and project reviews to establish the existing ability levels of the project managers. A priority list was compiled by balancing the size/risk of the project and the ability of the project manager assigned to it.

We then commenced the uplift program over the course of a three month period, which included five arms:

- 1) **Onsite Training** - we ran four training sessions in cooperation with the firm's enterprise portfolio office. These targeted key areas of concern.
- 2) **Personalised Coaching** – which included 'sit down' sessions with each of the high and medium priority project managers to work through issues and help with the application of their training. This brought the various capability levels up to a consistent level very quickly.
- 3) **Project Assurance** – we conducted a monthly review of the project's progress, with particular note of key areas of concern. This meant that both the project executive and project management teams were able to identify what was next. These were, after all, live projects with considerable funding.
- 4) **Expert Mentoring** – in addition to the personalised coaching, the project managers were provided 'contact anytime' mentoring access for advice on any timely, situational concerns they had.
- 5) **Vault Access** – the enterprise portfolio office and the project management pool were all provided access to the GO TO PMO Vault to encourage the use of consistent and high quality tools and templates.

Phase 2: Reinforce

After a substantial increase in the project management capability level, we moved to Phase 2. This included both ongoing expert mentoring and access to the GO TO PMO Vault.

The Result:

After just three months, the capability level of the project management staff improved dramatically. Projects that previously had no governance, 6 month delays, 90% underspend, and were running from a simple task list had been transformed into projects that any project professional would be proud of. Clear executive communication, clear benefit contribution, clear and agreed budget spend and activity timelines. The reinforcement mentoring and vault access provided the ongoing safety and commitment to maintain this new level of standard. Notably, projects started tracking on time, on budget, and the risk surrounding the transformation spend dramatically lessened.