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Project Organization Proposal (POP) and Project Leadership Plan Guide

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ABSTRACT

In my 20+ years of experience using SAS and organizing projects, the success or failure of any project, no matter how small or large, generally resulted from how well a project was planned, organized and executed. This paper presents an easy to use Project Organization Proposal (POP) that can be implemented without adding additional resources to the MIS or IT divisions. It simply suggests the effective use of existing resources.

However, as would be expected, the POP will only succeed if it receives support from 1) business MIS Management, 2) IT Management, 3) and their respective staff. The collaboration of all resources associated with a project is critical to its success. Clearly defining roles and accountabilities must be established prior to project initiation.

Also included in this paper is a Project Leadership Plan guide. This guide will serve as a critical planning document, or checklist, that can be used to ensure that any project meets with success. If this guide cannot be completed, the project should not be initiated.

INTRODUCTION

In my 20+ years of experience using SAS and organizing projects, the success or failure of any project, no matter how small or large, generally resulted from how well a project was planned, organized and executed. This paper presents an easy to use Project Organization Proposal (POP) that can be implemented without adding additional resources to the MIS or IT divisions. It simply suggests the effective use of existing resources.

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BENEFITS OF PROJECT ORGANIZATION

One of the first and foremost activities associated with project organization is to identify and establish the project team. By correctly identifying the correct group of individuals, the project, and those associated with it, will develop a team approach and synergy from the beginning.

In order for this "team" approach to be effective, the project must partner with the Project Management Office (PMO) and Information Technology (IT). This will capitalize on expert organizational resources. This is the area where there is a general difficulty regarding the sharing of information. Therefore, this organizational arrangement will remove silos of disparate information and encourage sharing. Doing so will make it easier to identify opportunities for automation and enhancements. Additionally, the project will be able to capitalize on the company's existing knowledge base. It will also ensure quicker and more effective project deliverables.

Once the project organization takes form between the business, PMO, and IT; it will stimulate idea generation and team participation in broad-based solutions. This will also lead to a more effective use of technology tools and data structures (i.e., OLAP cubes, Data Warehouse Metadata, etc.), building an environment where any perceived negative is an opportunity for success.

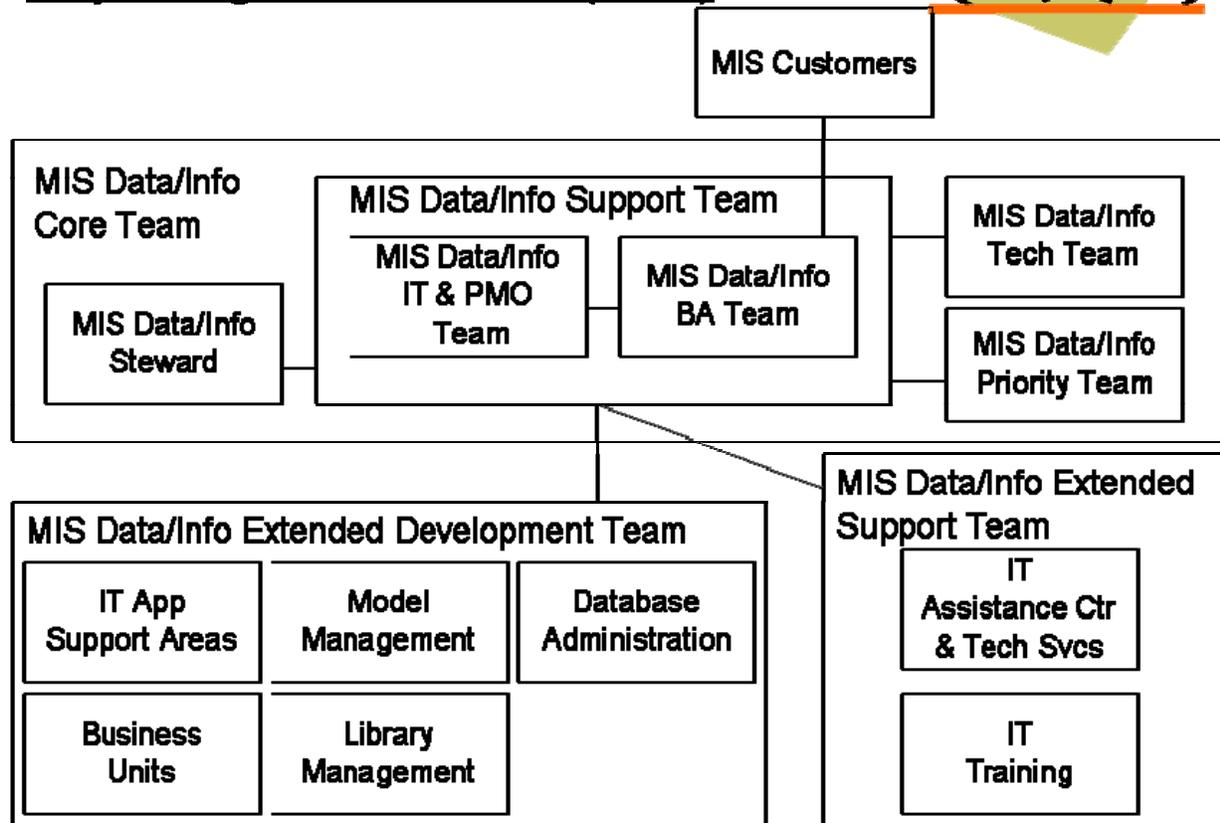
The effects of good project organization will ensure project success by leveraging management support as it relates to team and individual accountability. The only cost is the time it takes to communicate, organize, and implement the POP based on commitment levels. An important fact for management to consider is that existing resources can be used to execute the POP. Of course, savings will be realized on a project by project basis.

PROJECT ORGANIZATION MODEL (POM) CHART

The following visual illustrates a model of how the relationships of all organizational roles would be related on a given project. Depending on the scope of the project, certain components of this model may not be fully utilized.

POP Plan, cont . . .

Project Organization Model (POM)



PROJECT ORGANIZATION MODEL (POM) ROLE DEFINITIONS

The following table contains further articulation of the responsibility carried by each role outlined in the POM illustration shown earlier. It is critical that each individual carrying out one or more of these roles have a clear understanding of the corresponding responsibilities associated with a particular role. In doing so, there is clarity of expectations that will virtually eliminate any potential for "finger-pointing" when a particular expectation is possibly not met for whatever reason. Managing expectations is a key to the perception that is conveyed regarding the success or failure of a project.

Role	Responsibility
MIS Customers	Internal & External Requestors of Information/Analytics
MIS Data/Info Core Team	Group responsible for facilitating project execution
MIS Data/Info Steward	Individual responsible for managing team/project performance
MIS Data/Info Support Team	IT & BA team jointly responsible for facilitating and/or executing project task performance
MIS Data/Info IT & PMO Team	Specific IT & PMO resources assigned to support the POP Plan including one Project Management resource from the PMO. Review development recommendation and resource requirements.
MIS Data/Info BA Team	Specific BA resources assigned to support the specified project. Interface with customers to identify business requirements and project players. This person is responsible for applying the POM to the project.
MIS Data/Info Tech Team	Group of IT and/or BA resources responsible for technology access
MIS Data/Info Priority Team	Review Board consisting of the MIS Executive and a IT Executive
MIS Data/Info Extended Development Team	Group of resource areas that may be required, as the need arises, to assist with project task execution
IT App Support Areas	Application support teams required for administrative system information support (e.g., Assist in resolving data integrity issues).
Model Management	Data modeling group that can assist as needed to support data structure development
Database Administration	IT team that can assist with data access and processing performance
Business Units	Groups or Individuals that process data and information who can clarify data usage and business requirements
Library Management	IT team that supports MIS Data/Info metadata administration
MIS Data/Info Extended Support Team	Group that supports Desktop and Software Usability
IT Assistance Center & Tech Services	Group that supports LAN and Desktop services (Help Desk)
IT Training	Group that schedules, facilitates, or performs technology training

ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATION

Of course, there cannot be a ship with two rudders or captains. Correspondingly, no project will be successful without a clear leader. It is recommended that the organization establish a MIS Data/Information Steward. This should be defined and communicated as one single accountable person. It would be best if this individual is positioned as a dotted line, direct report, to Executive of MIS in order to achieve an unbiased approach to overall project support and authority.

Also, the MIS Data/Information Steward should have no staff responsibility. This will ensure proper focus and priority toward project success. In most organizations this could be staffed by an existing Senior Level MIS Business Analyst (BA). This individual would be responsible for the establishment of a MIS Data/Info BA Team consisting of a cross-functional support group (one representative from each MIS team on call as a point of contact to provide departmental expertise). Additionally, this role would include being gatekeeper of all Data/Info requests.

Another key to project success is to make the Data/Information Steward responsible for developing and implementing a standard Project Initiation-to-Implementation Plan (PIIP) approach (Capitalizing on existing Project Request Processes). This would include the provision of regular PIIP status reports to the Executive responsible for MIS and to the PIIP Gatekeeper Committee (if necessary for project priority reviews). This form of reporting will ensure that Project Accountability is clearly tracked and communicated to management and all parties involved. It is critical to ensure that key projects stay on task and roadblocks are removed in a timely fashion.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP GUIDE

The "Project Leadership Guide," shown on the following page, is intended to be used at the time of project initiation. It focuses on the basic project management structure that is required to correctly organize a project in order to achieve success.

As noted earlier, managing expectations is critical to conveying the success or failure of a project. By clearly outlining all project components early, and then reviewing these as the project progresses, the expectations can be managed effectively and timely. When it is seen that a project is moving away from one (or any) of the pre-defined specifications, then a communication can be sent to those individuals involved, making certain that all project participants have the same (new or existing) expectation in that specific area.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP PLAN GUIDE FORM (FOR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS)

Project Leadership Plan Guide Form (For Individual Projects)

Objective:	
<i>What is this project going to accomplish? Consider tying the stated Objective to one or more Corporate level objectives.</i>	
Expected Benefits:	
<i>In what areas, will this project request result in benefits to the organization, division, department, process, etc.?</i>	
Project Scope:	
<i>What are the boundaries of this project (defining this early will minimize "scope creep")?</i>	
Business Requirements:	
<i>What does the requester want?</i>	
Project Team Resources:	
Project Steering Committee/Board (PSCB):	
Executive Chair:	
BA Resource Manager:	
IT Resource Manager:	
Project Team Leader/Facilitator:	
BA Support Representative (s):	
IT Support Representative (s):	
External Support Representative (s):	
Project Output:	
<i>What will be the result of this project request (i.e., Improvements, Report, KPI, Collaboration, System Enhancement, etc.)?</i>	
Project Timeline:	
<i>When will the various phases of the project be completed (use specific dates)?</i>	
Project Communication Plan:	
<i>How will the project and task status be communicated to the project team and project board (Include frequency and media type, i.e., Internet, E-Mail, Weekly Status Meetings, etc.)?</i>	
Project Contingencies:	
<i>What are the known issues that may cause delays in getting the project completed?</i>	
Current Identified Task List:	
<i>What are the specific tasks that must be completed in order to deliver the project output (This list should only include those tasks required to get the project initiated. Additional tasks should be managed in a project tracking tool such as IMS Project)?</i>	
Project Plan Approval Signatures (as appropriate):	
<i>This may be necessary when enlisting project team members across departmental boundaries.</i>	
PSCB Representative:	
Line Manager:	
Project Leader:	

CONCLUSION

The Project Organization Proposal (POP) is easy to use and can be implemented without adding additional resources to the MIS or IT divisions. It simply suggests the effective use of existing resources. The success or failure of any project, no matter how small or large, results from how well a project was planned, organized and executed. The POP will help put this project structure in place.

The POP will only succeed if it receives support from 1) business MIS Management, 2) IT Management, 3) and their respective staff. The collaboration of all resources associated with a project is critical to its success. Clearly defining roles and accountabilities must be established prior to project initiation.

The Project Leadership Plan guide will serve as a critical planning document, or checklist, that can be used to ensure that any project meets with success. If this guide cannot be completed, the project should not be initiated.

CONTACT INFORMATION

(In case a reader wants to get in touch with you, please put your contact information at the end of the paper.)

Your comments and questions are valued and encouraged. Contact the author at:

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