Project management offices: A case of knowledge-based archetypes

Kevin C. Desouza\textsuperscript{a,}\textsuperscript{*}, J. Roberto Evaristob

\textsuperscript{a}The Information School, University of Washington, Mary Gates Hall, Suite 370, UW Box 352840, Seattle, WA 98195-2840, USA
\textsuperscript{b}Information and Decision Sciences Department, University of Illinois, Chicago, 601 S. Morgan St, MC 294, Chicago, IL 60607, USA

Abstract

While Project Management Offices (PMOs) have become a mainstay in organizations, systematic research has not yet been undertaken to study their intricacies. In this paper, we conduct an exploratory and descriptive case study of PMOs, based on our interviews with senior managers and directors of PMOs in 32 IT organizations. The objectives are to: (1) outline the nature and characteristics of PMOs; (2) classify and derive archetypes of PMOs; and (3) enumerate critical success factors of PMOs. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first paper to systematically investigate PMOs from a knowledge archetype perspective. A novel and significant contribution of this paper is the case description of four PMO archetypes, which clearly delineate PMOs based on their knowledge management functions and capabilities.

\textsuperscript{*}Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 206 616 0880.
E-mail addresses: kev.desouza@gmail.com (K.C. Desouza), evaristo@uic.edu (J.R. Evaristo).

0. Introduction

Much of the work conducted in organizations occurs as projects (Keil, Mixon, Saarinen, & Tuunainen, 1995). Project-based work is especially popular in the information technology domain. Statistics indicate that between 50\% and 80\% of IT projects are unsuccessful—they either fail to deliver on time, overstep budgeted estimates of resources and time, do not meet customer requirements, or fall short of customer expectations (Keil & Robey, 2001; Keil et al., 2000). This alarming scenario is hardly surprising—too many organizations tend to repeat the same mistakes too often, particularly in terms of knowledge transfer and reuse of the information derived from past projects (Collier, De Marco, & Fearey, 1996; Desouza, Dingsøyr, & Awazu, 2005). Some of the primary reasons for project failures are a result of poor knowledge management: lack of effective project estimation and budgeting, poor communication and information sharing practices, inadequate reuse of past experiences and lessons learned, and insufficient understanding of the technology, particularly its limitations. Other typical reasons are lack of consistency in management, lack of formal tracking, and lack of functional user involvement. The end result is overruns in cost and time through restarts or projects routinely abandoned before completion.
Establishing a Project Management Office (PMO) is one strategy that can be used to resolve these persistent problems—it is a source of centralized integration and a repository of knowledge which can be used to inform more effective and efficient IT project management. A well-implemented PMO can resolve the most challenging project management issues by capturing and transferring knowledge, maximizing the power of cross-functional teams, regulating the demand of integrated technologies, and providing ownership and accountability for key efforts. Moreover, it can fully assess the impact and risk of change and provide projects with guidance on best practices and standards.

PMOs have been common in the telecom, aerospace, and defense industries for decades now. Much of this can be attributed to the fact that in the life-blood of work in such organizations occurs in the form of multi-million (or billion) dollar projects. IT organizations began to develop PMOs in the pre-2000 era to oversee projects involved with Y2K transitions. PMOs were originally conceived as a means of capturing and disseminating good project management practices and project knowledge throughout the organization. Due to the success rate of Y2K transitions, many organizations continued with PMOs and extended their scope of activity to include analysis, communication, and decision support. The newer objectives were to improve Project Management (PM) skills and communication, follow a standardized and consistent methodology, and monitor projects for progress within time and budget.

In recent years, many organizations have implemented PMOs to help lower the typical risks facing projects. Whether implementing a one-time project with a defined start and end, or running an ongoing program with several projects, experienced project and program management are essential for successful, on-time, within-budget delivery. A PMO is seen to combine the deliverable and focused discipline of project management with the conceptual and analytical strengths of business consultancy. CIO Magazine and the Project Management Institute (PMI) surveyed 450 managers and found that 67% of their organizations had a PMO in place. The same survey concluded that the longer a PMO was operative, the higher was its impact on improving project success. The findings conclusively indicate that PMOs can instill project management discipline and align project management processes with an organization's overall strategic objectives.

The objective of this paper is to describe PMOs and outline the major knowledge-based archetypes. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first paper to systematically investigate PMOs from a knowledge archetype perspective. We conducted semi-structured interviews with PMO managers or directors in 32 IT organizations.

1. Research methodology

We conducted semi-structured interviews with PMO managers or directors in 32 IT organizations. This research methodology is an interview protocol where the researcher has pre-set questions to ensure that the same information is elicited from respondents, but will occasionally ask some spontaneous ones. However, since the order of the questions is not pre-determined, the researcher is free to pursue certain questions at greater length. The advantage of this approach is that it makes interviewing a number of different persons more systematic and comprehensive by delimiting the issues to be taken up in the interview. Logical gaps in the data collected can be anticipated and closed, while the interviews remain contextual yet fairly informal. Our objective was to get a representative sample of executives so as to collect information on the wide-ranging functions of PMOs. Consequently, we chose organizations from a wide assortment of industries, from manufacturing, government, academia, to biotechnology. Our choice of organizations was restricted to PMOs that oversaw IT projects. Upon synthesis and documentation of our findings, we shared copies of our report with the respondents and sought further comments. The comments and extensive feedback helped to refine the findings and were incorporated into this paper. This paper can be looked at a collection of exploratory insights from conducting mini-case studies of PMOs in 32 organizations.

2. Definition of a PMO

A universal definition of a PMO is not possible, because developing a PMO that works for an organization is an exercise in both customization and sustained effort. PMOs can vary widely in terms of size, structure, and accountability. There are no blueprints to establish a PMO. The only criterion for success is that the PMO
structure be closely aligned to the organization’s corporate culture. The most effective PMOs are those that yield improvements in due course, and continuously drive project teams to improve on their performance.

However, most PMOs in IT organizations have certain common characteristics. First, they are chartered with a responsibility to contribute to the success of project management in the organization. The precise nature and scope of their contribution will vary depending on the PMO class and archetype, a point we will address in a later section. Second, most PMOs are responsible for ensuring that projects being undertaken (or projects being considered) are in alignment with the strategic goals of the organization. Third, most PMOs are set up as independent units in the organization, with their own budgets and resources. Fourth, the composition of a PMO normally involves a fluid mix of experienced business and technology professionals—individuals who have deep knowledge on both aspects of software management. Fifth, PMOs are responsible for the development of standards and methodologies for project management and improving the capability of the organization in the practice of these methodologies. With these objectives, the PMO may integrate any combination of the following:

- **Project knowledge management**: Leveraging knowledge in the form of best practices in how projects are managed in the organization, and also lessons learnt from conducting projects in the organizations. This knowledge is hopefully fed through the other areas of the organization, such as engineering, research and development, and product development, so as to improve the products and services of the organization.
- **Project processes and procedures**: Defining the project management methodology of the organization, and the metrics used to evaluate projects in terms of successes (or failures). An outcome of such an effort is the ability to have a defined and reusable project management framework to govern how work is conducted in the organization.
- **Training for project teams**: Managing the educational requirements of project managers to ensure that they have are best equipped to deal with project complexities, managing customer expectations, and engaging the project team.
- **Project resources**: Managing the staffing, equipment, office space, and other resources in order to make the most optimal use of organizational resources.
- **Project portfolio management**: Managing and coordinating the multiple projects occurring in the organization both simultaneously and historically, i.e. looking at current projects in terms of their characteristics, especially risk, and comparing them to past efforts to plan appropriately.
- **Project financial management**: Ensuring that a project is financially viable and is contributing the overall business value of the organization. Here, the focus is to identify those projects that seem to be runaways or where sunk cost has not turned up enough value to justify carrying on the effort.

3. Roles and functions of PMOs

We can segment the roles of PMOs into three levels: strategic, tactical, and operational. Knowledge management remains one of the primary functions of the PMO at all levels.

3.1. Strategic level

At the strategic level, the role of the PMO is to ensure that projects are aligned with:

- **Strategic objectives of the organization**, so that projects undertaken are in line with the long-term objectives of the business. They ensure that project and team members have a direct link to the organization’s strategic operating plans, and are aligned on project process, selection, priority, and execution.
- **Strategic growth of the organization**, so that projects undertaken will contribute positively to the growth of the business and there will be ongoing project decision support for a business expansion strategy.
- **Efficient and effective knowledge management**, conducted so as to improve the policies, practices, and methodologies of project management with efficient knowledge capture, knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer, and knowledge reuse mechanisms in place.
3.2. Tactical level

At the tactical level, the role of the PMO is to ensure:

- **Close integration between project initiatives**, so that there is coordination among the various projects being undertaken at the organization. This necessitates the close tracking of each project to deliver the expected results on time and budget.
- **Consistent quality of products and services generated by projects**, by monitoring that projects stringently follow defined standards and methodologies.
- **Knowledge sharing** among the members of the projects to ensure clear communication between project teams.

3.3. Operational level

At the operational level, the PMO is responsible for:

- **Conducting project evaluations**, by creating the process for operational reviews, approving request for increase to budgets and/or resources, and ensuring that projects are being conducted in an efficient manner.
- **Integration of knowledge derived from projects**, by ensuring that information is readily available to inform decisions on specific implementation processes.
- **Expert knowledge on project management**, by serving as a central repository of lessons learned, best practices, and standardized methodologies.
- **Constant monitoring of customer satisfaction**, regular project status reports to decision-makers, and coordinating communications across internal and external customers.

4. PMO knowledge-archetypes

We have been able to classify PMOs on two dimensions: administrative and knowledge-intensive. Administrative PMOs provide project managers with administrative support. The focus of these PMOs is on managing information about projects, tasks, resources, and the like, and in reporting such information. As their name suggests, their function is administrative support.

Knowledge-intensive PMOs, on the other hand, take an active role in managing best practices of project management, learning from projects (both failures and successes), and improving the maturity of project management at the organization. They make a purposeful effort to develop and apply knowledge to improve performance. Within this classification, we have derived four PMO archetypes. Administrative PMOs were labeled Supporters, while knowledge-intensive PMOs can be Information Managers, Knowledge Managers, and Coaches. The archetypes usually map to the maturity level of project management in an organization.

**The Supporter**: As an administrative PMO, the Supporter serves a primarily administrative function by providing project status, identifying risks and potential issues, and maintaining project archives. It reports on projects, but does not try to influence them. Functional departments remain deeply involved in the projects, continue to make decisions, keep their employees engaged in the success of the work, and are ultimately responsible for the project success. By its nature, the Supporter is a passive model and provides services only on request. Under this archetype, organizations are slower to adopt a project management methodology and fail to reap the full benefits of the PMO. Moreover, as the Supporter has no control over project management practices or project selection, it is difficult to evaluate the benefits that it delivers.

**The Information Manager**: The Information Manager stores information, which is used for evaluation purposes, as a dashboard. Its function is to track and report the progress of projects, and to serve as a source of information about projects and consolidated status updates. This is a knowledge-intensive PMO with a partial administrative function. However, this PMO rarely takes the initiative and has no enforcement authority. Functional departments remain responsible for project success.
The Knowledge Manager: The Knowledge Manager is a repository of best practices, but has no administrative responsibility. It is a knowledge base that provides project expertise, mentoring and training, and is recognized as the organization’s authority on all knowledge related to project management. This knowledge-intensive PMO provides the organization with an overview of its project portfolio, focuses on project delivery, and is the central point of accountability for the successful delivery of specific projects. Project Managers may report to the PMO (permanently or only for the duration of the project), but the PMO rarely has enforcement authority except in projects it manages. The critical difference between an Information Manager and a Knowledge Manager is that an Information Manager PMO is primarily concerned with collecting and managing information about projects, whereas a Knowledge Manager PMO is responsible for the collecting and managing the best practices and insights.

The Coach: The Coach is the most knowledge-intensive archetype. It is a house of best practices and knowledge on the state of project management in the organization, and is also an enforcer to ensure that the best practices are used to inform future project management efforts. The Coach controls focused improvement and is a center of excellence with the responsibility of enforcing project excellence in the organization. As such, it is a strong agent of change whose purpose is to overcome resistance and pave the way to a new project management model.

Based on its defined function, the structure of a PMO should reflect its authority to represent project management teams. An administrative PMO may have little authority, while a knowledge-intensive PMO has greater power to guide or determine project management practices.

Similarly, the technology framework will vary for administrative and knowledge-intensive PMOs. An administrative PMO can do with a relatively simple infrastructure as it serves a less demanding supportive function. A knowledge-intensive PMO calls for a more complex framework that efficiently captures tacit and explicit project knowledge, builds a complete knowledge base, and disseminates the knowledge to all project teams in order to promote comprehensive knowledge transfer and reuse.

Administrative PMOs are not accountable for learning, while knowledge-intensive PMOs play a pivotal role in this area. Information Managers have to ensure that there is ample scope for individual learning about projects and project management practices; Knowledge Managers are responsible for linking individual learning to project team learning, and setting benchmarks and standards to measure results. Coaches go one step further; they ensure that individual and team learning is also linked to organizational learning by driving higher project performance through improved project management standards and practices.

Choosing the right PMO is not a straightforward task. Which PMO archetype is best for an organization depends on the maturity level of its project management practices. Administrative PMOs are often found in organizations where project management is comparatively immature and where the organization has difficulty integrating multi-functional projects with its management hierarchy; the perceived ‘solution’ is to curtail the powers of the PMO to avoid internal conflict. Unfortunately, this approach is wide off the mark, because knowledge-intensive PMOs would instill a more disciplined and productive approach.

Knowledge-intensive PMOs are suitable for organizations that have developed mature project management practices. This allows project managers enough leeway for innovation while the PMO continues to coordinate and drive focused improvement in project management. Knowledge Managers, for example, handle projects as portfolios of initiatives, allowing for efficient management of resources, interdependencies, and project prioritization. Coaches often support areas such as procurement, contracts, and value/risk management and evolve into a core competency of the organization.

5. Lessons learned

In this section we will highlight critical success factors gleaned out of our exploratory study of PMOs.

5.1. Building a strong foundation

When setting up a PMO, the first priority is to understand how the PMO will fit into the corporate culture, and to choose a complementary administrative or knowledge-intensive archetype when starting the PMO planning process.
How does an organization go about implementing a PMO? Should it use a top-down or bottom-up approach? The answer depends on the organizational structure.

If the organization is centralized—i.e. tightly structured in a rigid hierarchy, with decision rights restricted to one individual or select small number of individuals—it will probably respond well to a knowledge-intensive, process-driven PMO which “owns” the project managers and executes projects directly; a top-down approach. If the organization is decentralized—i.e. loosely structured, with decision rights available to individuals across all levels—it would do better with a PMO that is a result of voluntary collaboration of project managers (who are “owned” by the business or functional units); a bottom-up approach.

Hybrid archetypes may also be tailored to the organizational culture. For example, an organization implementing ambitious technical projects with subject matter experts as project managers may do well with a knowledge-intensive community of practice. A community of practice comprises of a group of professionals with a common set of problems, who collaboratively work toward solving them and who represent a knowledge repository. Under this model, project managers select PMO members, who then recommend processes and tools, but do not implement projects. Another hybrid variation could combine vertical lines of responsibility and authority with role-based behaviors.

In the top-down approach, the PMO will have management support, but knowledge dissemination may become challenging. Employees will always resist change, so unless the PMO can win the approval and active support of all employees, it is not likely to be very successful. In the bottom-up approach, it is necessary to seek management support. Senior management has to be involved—either as a sponsor or via a reporting relationship—if the PMO is to be effective. Without this support, funding could become difficult and put a premature end to the initiative. It would be a good practice for senior managers to demonstrate their support by actively participating in various PMO-sponsored activities such as project review meetings, training sessions, and reward mechanisms.

5.2. Establishing the background

It is also important to establish the background that led to the PMO being initiated. Crucial questions are:

- What trigger identified the need for a PMO?
- Which events determined that setting up a PMO was important?
- If the PMO is being initiated as the result of a series of failed or unsuccessful projects, what were the major influences that led to their failure?
- If the initiative is the result of a recommendation by an external consultant, what were the factors that influenced the recommendation?
- If the PMO is being established to provide a focal point for a strategic program or portfolio, what are the critical factors that will determine the program’s success?

By understanding these drivers, it is possible to identify the factors of greatest concern to stakeholders. While a PMO should ideally play a role in supporting project success and is positioned to provide the structure, consistency, and coherency to facilitate project delivery, focusing on these critical factors at the outset will go a long way to demonstrating long-term value.

5.3. The right project for the right manager

Successful knowledge-intensive PMOs typically segment project managers in the organization based on their knowledge, aptitude, and orientation. The most generic classification is segmenting project managers into those who are business-oriented and those who are technology-oriented. Most often, technology-oriented managers feel more comfortable handling details of technical designs, system coding and development, testing, and quality assurance. This is because they have deep knowledge about the technology and also command the respect of their peers.

Business-oriented managers, on the other hand, flounder when they are put in charge of managing technology details or overseeing a project that is largely dominated by technology issues. They are comfortable
dealing with issues of cross-functional integration, management of stakeholder expectation, business value analysis, and related functions. Segmenting project managers by their orientation allows the PMO to ensure that the best talent is harnessed in terms of the best fit for project requirements. Moreover, it allows for better communication among the project team. As one manager remarked to us:

Think of it as a game of football...you need the offense and defense to click and work together for winning... just like in software management we need the technical and business sides to work in concert. Now, why do we have a ‘Defensive Coach’ and an ‘Offensive Coach’... these coaches have the respect of their respective players as they have played those roles before... chaos would break out if we had an offensive coach try to lead the defense and vice versa... the Head Coach is the Project Management Office.

This is a crucial issue, as project success can normally be attributed to the effectiveness of communication among team members. If team members do not speak the same language—i.e. one speaks tech-babble and another uses management jargon—coordinating work becomes a cumbersome and highly problematic.

At First Penn Insurance Company, tech-savvy managers are mainly assigned to projects that take less than 160 h of work and comprise of working on technology-specific problems. Business-savvy project managers are assigned to projects that require more than 160 h of work and are normally assigned to the strategic issues of the project such as analyzing the value of the project in the context of the current project portfolio of the organization, conducting feasibility and business value analysis, and other non-technical matters such as management of customer relations and stakeholder expectations.

5.4. Clear reporting lines

Successful PMOs across the archetype spectrum have clearly identified reporting lines. Roles, responsibilities, and accountability issues are clearly identified, specified, and implemented. Different options include:

1. The PMO as an independent group with power and independence.
2. The PMO as a group reporting to an executive in the functional department.
3. PMOs as groups based in diverse geographical locations to oversee local projects.

When PMOs have autonomous power (such as knowledge-intensive Coach PMOs) managing all project work through the PMO provides a single source for data and overview of the portfolio of projects. Issue resolution is considerably simplified because there is a single escalation path to the top decision maker. Additionally, project managers gain support from working in close collaboration. While this structure empowers the PMO with greater responsibility and authority, it should not do so at the expense of teamwork and communication. Although it is an independent entity, the PMO still needs to maintain cooperative working relationships across all departments in order to be successful.

The disadvantage of this option is that it can cause functional unit heads to disengage with core project work. As the custodian of tacit and explicit project knowledge, the PMO may also get a "project watchdog" reputation, which could deter good project practices outside of the PMO. An independent PMO is effective when an organization is working on several complex projects and only if the culture of the organization includes well-developed communication and teamwork.

PMOs reporting to an executive in a functional department may be a good option for organizations that work on multiple yet independent assignments. For example, if a company manufacturing PCs is also in the Automobile business, individual PMOs for the business units reporting to their respective functional heads makes practical business sense, streamlines the exchange of relevant knowledge, and meet the need to provide consistent, repeatable processes that maximize the organization’s profits.

PMOs can also be created based on geographical locations to oversee local projects. Issues are sure to arise when there is global work to be conducted involving participants from various countries and cultures. In this case, regional PMOs can help resolve issues based on their knowledge of the local culture and regulations, and also be responsible for resource allocation. The goal of the regional PMO is not to have all the necessary knowledge but to make all the knowledge available to the people who need it in the field as well as at the top.
5.5. PMO charter and related documents

Successful PMOs have very clear documents that substantiate their credibility. The three most important aspects to get down in writing include the PMO charter, the PMO policy, and the PMO methodology. The PMO charter is essentially a documented roadmap that defines the key questions or issues to be addressed by the PMO as well as what it will deliver. It may also include information such as team composition or the relationship of the PMO to the organization’s strategic or operational goals.

The charter should clearly state the purpose of establishing the PMO, its role in the organization, what it is expected to accomplish, its source of authority, who its customers are, and how the PMO staff relate to the rest of the organization. The charter can be written for several reasons. It can be a proposal for the establishment of a PMO. Alternately, an existing PMO may create a charter to reaffirm its role in the organization, or to formally specify a change in its role as requested by management.

A PMO policy is necessary to establish sufficient uniformity of management and to enable effective project portfolio management. The policy should state the overall objectives of the initiative, and include guiding principles that the PMO will use to keep itself on the right track, such as risk management, people management, communications management and the like.

The PMO methodology should address the business needs of the organization, and provide project managers with a framework of tools, processes and metrics. Often, the PMO methodology specifically addresses the budgeting, project planning, status reporting, risk management and change control aspects of projects.

Lack of this documentation could have severe consequences. Without a clearly communicated mandate there is lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, which, in turn, may lead to lack of credibility of the PMO. Unambiguous documentation, on the other hand, wins people’s attention in terms of adherence to a policy for discipline, formalizes knowledge sharing protocols, and paves the way for clear accountability.

5.6. Metrics to evaluate PMOs

The PMO is a significant investment and management needs to evaluate whether the investment is yielding measurable benefits. Metrics should measure those aspects of PMO performance that are directly related to its policy objectives. Key questions that metrics need to answer include:

- Over a period of time, such as 1 year, are projects more successful? How does the organization measure the level of success?
- Is there measurable evidence that project teams are adopting a more professional approach toward project management?
- Is there better knowledge sharing and transfer, particularly the sharing and reuse of project-specific tacit and explicit knowledge?
- Are projects meeting their business objectives more frequently and more efficiently?
- Is there greater client participation?

While these are essential measurements, metrics for evaluating PMO success cannot be pre-determined; there must be a gestation period for them to be built up. The organization has to identify key areas of concern before it can establish ways to measure the impact of the PMO in those crucial areas. Next, internal and external metrics need to be calibrated to measure success and improve performance. Metrics can be:

*Project-centric:* to measure improvement in project management and product delivery processes, such as reduction of time and effort. Is less time expended in preparing status reports, and in senior management reviewing status reports? Is less effort required to consolidate time reports and update schedules? Is there faster identification of project issues and potential overruns?

*PMO-centric:* to measure how effectively the PMO is delivering its services, such as increase in project level maturity, better management of project results, and improved communication.
Business value-centric: to measure the business value of deploying standardized project management processes, such as higher percentage of project completion/success criteria. They could also measure how closely the organization is meeting its objectives over a specified period, and generally reflect the efficiency level of the PMO.

The first step towards measuring a process is the ability to define the process (Power, Desouza, & Bonifazi, 2005). Without an adequate definition of what is being measured, we might be inclined to measure different things at different points in time, or different people will measure different things, as there is lack of consensus about the artifact being measured. Once we define the process, the second step involves articulating which attribute is being measured. In the case of projects, we must be clear about what each indicator of outsourcing is measuring, and how each indicator relates to other indicators. For instance, we must specify if individual indicators can be combined to arrive at a composite score. It is common to measure attributes such as the time taken to complete the process, the number of critical issues that arise during the conduct of a process, etc.

The third step involves analyzing the measures, basically answering the question “what do the indicators tell us?” For scores to be meaningful, we need to understand them within a given context. Context normally involves two items: (1) history of the process, and (2) outsider information. History of the process gives us indicators about how we are doing currently compared to how we were doing in the past. We hope to fare better on positive indicators while lowering the numbers on negative indicators. Developing a historical context for evaluating metrics requires time and experience. We cannot expect to compare how we did today to yesterday to tell us something brilliant; however, comparing how we did today against the average performance over a month will provide us with some insightful thoughts.

While history takes time to develop, there is the more immediate context of outsider information. Here, we can always compare our indicators against those of other organizations through external benchmarking against organizations in similar situations. Two types of benchmarking are common. The first is where we compare ourselves to the average performance of organizations in the industry. The second is where we compare ourselves to industry leaders. The first kind of benchmarking is ideal in the early stages of the process as it gives us an indicator of where we need to be relative to rest of the industry. The latter is more suitable once we have gained more experience with the process and are looking to move up the charts and reach higher goals.

6. Concluding comments

The primary purpose of a PMO is to centralize information in order to create a knowledge base. An organization would profit from the time and effort it takes to define the right PMO archetype to match its corporate culture and goals. A well-defined, effective PMO can be an important step to greater success for the organization.

Administrative PMOs typically document and disseminate project reports, lessons learned and best practices, but here tacit knowledge from projects is difficult to capture. Knowledge-intensive PMOs create collaborative communities for project managers to share knowledge and learning that may be difficult to capture and document through conventional mechanisms. The synergy of project management and knowledge management concepts creates a sturdy knowledge-based framework that enables sharing of project knowledge and lessons learned, and promotes the cross-pollination of ideas. Knowledge-based PMOs, therefore, promote wider organizational involvement and support and facilitate ownership of project management knowledge.

References


**Dr. Kevin C. Desouza** is on the faculty of the Information School at the University of Washington. He is a founding faculty member of the Institute for Innovation Management (I 3M) and is an affiliate faculty member of the Center for American Politics and Public Policy, both housed at the University of Washington. His immediate past position was the Director of the Institute for Engaged Business Research, a think-tank of the Engaged Enterprise, a strategy consulting firm with expertise in the areas of knowledge management, crisis management, strategic deployment of information systems, and government and competitive intelligence assignments. He has authored *Managing Knowledge with Artificial Intelligence* (Quorum Books, 2002), co-authored *The Outsourcing Handbook* (Kogan Page, 2006), *Managing Information in Complex Organizations* (M.E. Sharpe, 2005) and *Engaged Knowledge Management* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), and edited *New Frontiers of Knowledge Management* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). His most recent book is currently in press—*Agile Information Systems*—to be published by Butterworth Heinemann (2006). In addition, he has published over 100 articles in prestigious practitioner and academic journals. His work has also been featured by a number of publications such as the Washington Internet Daily, Computerworld, KM Review, and Human Resource Management International Digest. Dr. Desouza has advised major international corporations and government organizations on strategic management issues ranging from knowledge management, to competitive intelligence, and crisis management. He is frequently an invited speaker on a number of cutting-edge business and technology topics for national and international, industry and academic audiences. Dr. Desouza is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

**Dr. Roberto Evaristo** is a faculty member at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering from Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, a Master’s degree in Transportation Engineering from Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and a Ph.D. in Management Information Systems from the University of Minnesota, USA. He has consulted extensively with organizations in the USA and South America on knowledge management and competitive intelligence. He is currently involved in several projects related to the management of distributed projects in virtual organizations, with work done in Japan, USA and Europe. He has published extensively in outlets such as Communications of the ACM, European Journal of Management, IEEE Transactions in Engineering Management, The International Journal of Project Management, Database, Information Technology and People, Journal of the Association for Global Strategic Information, Journal of International Information Management, International Information Systems, and Competitive Intelligence Review. He guest co-edited a special issue of Information Technology and People on cross-cultural research in Information Systems and is currently editing another special issue for the Journal of Global Information Management (JGIM).