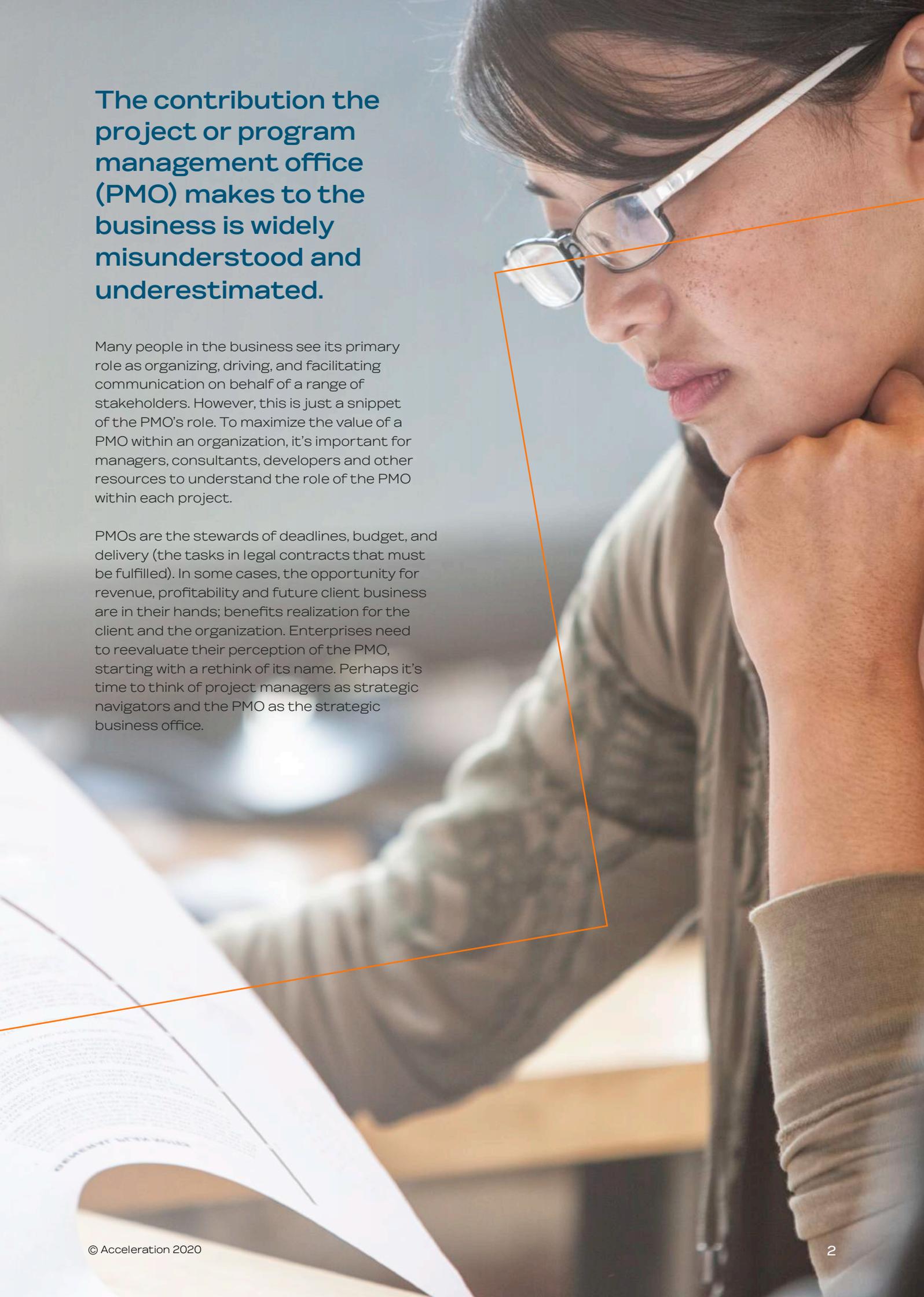


3 ways the PMO helps organizations navigate a complex world

From program management office to strategic business office

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A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark hair and glasses, looking intently at a document. Her hand is resting on her chin, suggesting deep thought or concentration. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a desk and other documents. An orange line graphic starts from the right side of her face and extends across the page, framing the text.

The contribution the project or program management office (PMO) makes to the business is widely misunderstood and underestimated.

Many people in the business see its primary role as organizing, driving, and facilitating communication on behalf of a range of stakeholders. However, this is just a snippet of the PMO's role. To maximize the value of a PMO within an organization, it's important for managers, consultants, developers and other resources to understand the role of the PMO within each project.

PMOs are the stewards of deadlines, budget, and delivery (the tasks in legal contracts that must be fulfilled). In some cases, the opportunity for revenue, profitability and future client business are in their hands; benefits realization for the client and the organization. Enterprises need to reevaluate their perception of the PMO, starting with a rethink of its name. Perhaps it's time to think of project managers as strategic navigators and the PMO as the strategic business office.

Here are three ways PMOs deliver value to the business:

1

A comprehensive toolbox

Project/program managers possess an inherent knowledge within the company they work for, as well as across many industries and disciplines. They lead scrums, huddles, status updates, and workshops. They guard software requirements, product specifications, business playbooks, and so many other documents, with version control. This includes managing a suite of tools and platforms for:

- Agile/waterfall/any type of project management
- Product development
- Resource management
- Accounting/business profitability

Project managers that have been through the rigorous PMP certification process are armed with frameworks and processes that can be applied throughout the business in organizational design and transformation initiatives. In addition, the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK) equips them with a level of financial literacy.





2

Balancing the operational with the strategic

Project managers must balance collaboration and confidentiality. Project managers need to be analytical when developing and managing project reporting, strategic when organizing teams against scopes, and empathetic as inclusive collaboration seekers.

Project managers are keepers of gates and secrets across projects, programs and the wider organization. They provide counsel to the delivery team as it navigates difficult stakeholder needs and uncertain scope in one minute; and in the next, putting out implementation fires or supporting executive sponsors on client presentations and reporting.

“Project management has proven its value even more decisively in 2020, with PMO teams leaned on to keep operations and delivery on track in a remote working world.”

3

Navigating stakeholder needs and demands

The PMO keeps the momentum going throughout the program from initiation to close, while holding everyone accountable. A PMO team must be prepared to engage with professionals, and not so professionals, at all levels; front line to c-suite. Project managers manage high expectations, and often, distorted realities in the name of ‘successful’ delivery.

Whether they’re unblocking risks or contributing tactical input to deliverables, project managers are astute when others aren’t engaged. They have real insight on employee satisfaction and engagement because they get the truth from the source. Project managers have a unique vantage point on what clients want to see and how they want to see it, applying lessons learned across capabilities and subject matters, optimizing future delivery.

Project managers often find themselves amid disjointed businesses and cross-functional stakeholders. They need to communicate in a way that connects with a diverse audience, often while getting to know them in flight of a project. Balancing the politics and egos of internal stakeholders can be hard enough, but this is compounded when clients and their expectations are added to the mix.

The value of the PMO is rising

Project management has proven its value even more decisively in 2020, with PMO teams leaned on to keep operations and delivery on track in a remote working world. They are expected to bridge organizational gaps and build relationships via Teams and Zoom, during a high-stakes era when companies are making decisions today, that will reverberate for years to come.

To further increase their standing in the organization, project managers should become even more proactive. They should identify gaps in business capability and propose creative solutions, develop their skills through professional

certification and courses, and create presence with executive leadership on internal projects that demonstrate strategic value.

Project management talent and a high-performing PMO are key to building a well-functioning, efficient, and profitable organization that can compete in a complex, fast-changing world. Leading organizations are developing and nurturing project managers, treating them as strategic partners within the business. Project managers are not administrative assistants or meeting schedulers—they are enablers of growth and transformation.



About Acceleration

We enable the transformation of marketing organizations by building new data and technology-enhanced capability.

Our goal is to steward a step change from marketing which is fragmented, static and product-centric, to marketing that is orchestrated, agile and customer-centric.

Part of Wunderman Thompson, Acceleration employs 200 strategic marketing technologists globally.

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