

OPTIMIZING RESOURCE INVESTMENTS: USING METRICS TO BRING MORE VALUE

A real-world, practical guide to resource demand planning
in the Digital Age

Topics Included in This Guide:

- **Organizational Readiness:** Can your enterprise step up to the plate and design metrics that matter?
- **Designated Resources for Metrics Projects:** If you can't fit metrics projects into your headcount intelligently, you're doomed to fail.
- **Senior Management Sponsorship/Champions:** What to say to gain buy-in.
- **Continuous Learning/Improvement:** End your "cycle of PM metrics pain" with a cycle of continuous improvement and learning that allows you to measure what matters most.

GET YOUR METRICS, HERE!

- BEST METRICS FOR STRONG PMOS
- STARTING YOUR METRICS PROJECTS RIGHT
- CREATING A METRICS CULTURE
- ROI ON METRICS

In our last white paper, **6 Best Practices for Resource Demand Planning Success**, we shared how your organization can move quickly to manage new and innovative projects by harnessing resource demand planning (RDP) best practices. Now, we will talk about the best way to measure your PM activities in your portfolio; and the elements that must be present in your organization to help you forge metrics to not only meet project deliverables but become a true strategic partner.

You might be sick of hearing about certain kinds of metrics projects we've all either experienced or heard about. They don't work because no one knows how to follow them. The communication systems for them are totally ineffective. Or they are instituted from "on-high" with no firm relationship to the real world.

Yet if you want to start a process to make the most of everything you do, we've seen it over and over-- turn to metrics.

Resource Demand and Metrics

Manage resources with solid metrics and you've made a giant step in the direction of profitable change. Why? When you are technically enabled to do so, you can track the costs of every resource on every project. Your capacity is clear as day. Then, using solid analytics and scenario modeling, you can plot a course for any other projects on the horizon, including those not yet anticipated. Here are the four success criteria that we've identified to help you institute a system of metrics in your PMO and integrate them among your stakeholders and teams: Organizational Readiness; Designated Resources for Metrics Projects; Senior Management Sponsorship/Champions; and Continuous Learning/Improvement.

FURTHER READING

[EBOOK: WHY PPM AND PMOS FAIL](#)

Criteria 1: Organizational Readiness

UTILIZE YOUR TEAM

- START WITH SUGGESTIONS
- USE THEIR DIFFERENT IDEOLOGIES
- EXPLAIN WHY YOU CHOSE A CERTAIN WAY
- USE FACTS AND FIGURES

FURTHER READING

[PPM MASTER CLASS](#)

Eliyahu Goldratt once wrote—“Show me how you will measure me and I will show you how I will behave.” The underlying purpose of metrics programs is to drive behavior. Concerned parties include everyone who is working on projects across the company; executive board members; and functional leaders who must understand the way that their individual project value is being measured.

A metrics kick-off program that frames your activities as a continuous improvement initiative will allow everyone involved to understand what is at stake. Spend time promoting your metrics program and clearly explaining its key deliverables—and why they are important to your company.

A solid solution for tracking metrics allows you to get everyone on the same page. Chances are your project teams have diverse members from many different backgrounds. They have often worked in other organizations that have done things a certain way. Your entire organization will have ideas about how to track metrics and “pet” methodologies or approaches that they have used in the past.

This is as it should be. You hired these people for their rich backgrounds and skills at execution. Listen to their suggestions at the very beginning of your metrics program. During kick-off, mention several different methodologies (if applicable) that you reviewed when designing the new measurements. Describe clearly why you chose the methodology that you did—and use facts and figures to tell the story. Most of the time, you can use past projects from your systems to show what worked, what didn’t work and how you will measure all upcoming projects based on these missteps.

Please don’t ignore the measurements for success! Project teams, especially, work best when their goal is positive—not when they are engaged in avoiding disaster. Clearly explain how your new metrics methodology will empower them to succeed more often. There’s plenty of evidence to support your approach, if, of course, you’ve done your homework. If in doubt, ask us. We have all the evidence you need to show solid outcomes originate from solid metrics.

Element 2: Mark Your Metrics Territory Early: Designated, High Priority Project Status

WHY START A METRICS PROGRAM?

- IT HAS THE POWER TO MAKE EVERY PROJECT BETTER
- STRENGTHENS PROJECT MANAGEMENT ON EVERY LEVEL
- ALLOWS REDISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES TO FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT

We have found it necessary to add leadership headcount as well as allocating project team member “percentages” to a new metrics program—so this money has to come from somewhere.

At our company, we have a number of [case studies](#) that prove metrics bring measureable value to project portfolios. You need to get a hold of these to justify your business case for your new program.

There are great reasons to start a metrics program. They have the power to make every project better and to strengthen your project management on every level. High-performing companies use their resources to continually focus on improvement. They shave off costs whenever they can-but they also spend money when they have to do so to realize long-term results. The right metrics will deliver on this goal.



Begin early getting executive steering committee/executive boards "on board"



Hammer home the ways that solid metrics help the company manage risk



Use case studies to show the value of metrics



KEEP IT SIMPLE

- SIMPLE DASHBOARDS HELP PEOPLE VISUALIZE THEIR METRICS
- CREATES A SIMPLE BASIS FOR MOST PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONVERSATIONS
- HELPS TEAMS KNOW THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO ASK AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Element 3: Top-Down Empowerment

The executive board and/or enterprise steering committee are important teams to buy in to your metrics plan. The individuals who work in this capacity are used to working from measurements that track how well the company is doing on a global scale. You don't need to drill down into each individual project and explain its metrics with this group. You do need to be clear on how you will proactively plan to avoid risks from floundering projects in the future as well as how you will change course when current projects aren't meeting their goals.

They will also be interested in seeing the dollar signs attached to your metrics—and how following these measurements accurately across the portfolio will bring more value. Finally, using case studies to show how other companies have realized their business goals using PM metrics will go far when obtaining buy-in from the leaders of your business.

Element 4: Keep Everyone Learning

We work with clients across the product and service portfolio delivery functions who really like dashboards—and some who really despise them. Wherever you fall along this spectrum, we believe that dashboards embody a simplicity that helps people visualize their metrics better—and allow a simple basis for most project management conversations. You don't have to use dashboards, but keeping your discussions on a “dashboard-like” level will serve you well in creating a program that people will find easy to follow.

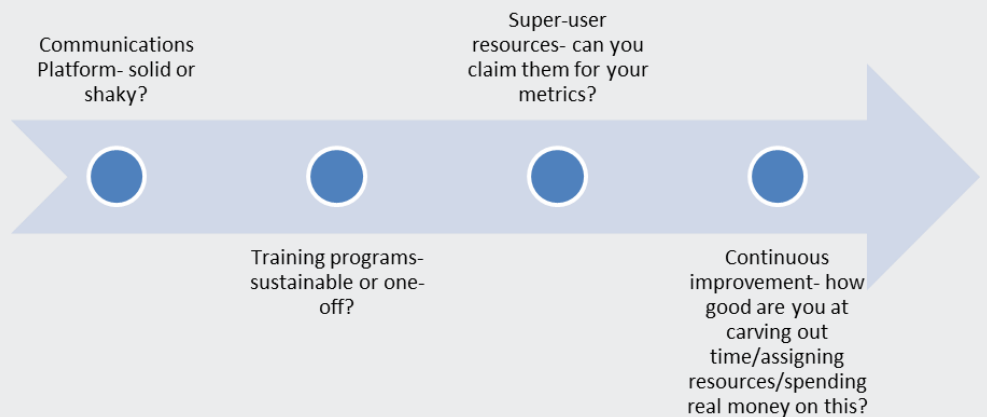
FURTHER READING

- [PPM RETURN-ON-INVESTMENT CALCULATOR](#)

FIND OUT MORE

- [DASHBOARDS AND ANALYTICS](#)

At the beginning of your metrics project, it's important to utilize the same disciplines you use when planning any project. This means building in communication channels that everyone can use. A platform for your metrics program might include everything you need to keep the project going—it should look just like any other project on your plate. This way, most of the people who are starting to use it will have somewhere to go to check definitions.



Remember, point your teams to where they can get help, communicate well and often and make sure you have those best-practice cases in one place for external comparisons. Fears will be allayed by showing people that your solution is straightforward—and also that it encompasses a state-of-the art behavior in your discipline.

FIND OUT MORE

[CASE STUDIES](#)

Train in Vain?

People don't automatically know how to use dashboards, check metrics and make adjustments against them. Although many project management pros are very good at this, there's usually a need for training on your new programs. You won't have time to "fill in the blanks" yourself if one or more project teams enters the wrong information into the system and it feeds into your metrics—the old data adage holds true here—"garbage in, garbage out."

In many cases, our customers ask us to train super-users on our technology so that after we leave, there is a solid information base still alive and well in the company. We suggest you do the same thing when instituting a new metrics program. Spend more time training and educating certain leaders among your project teams. You know the ones—the ones who tend to deliver excellence on whatever project they are working on. Make sure you get sign-off from their bosses to take up their time—and also institute a communications program that allows you to publicize their contributions.

Some of our clients also publish communications such as FAQs and create online coursework for project teams. One of the best practices we've seen for training and education is holding a kick-off seminar for all project teams and starting a regular email with tips and tricks to continuously refresh the skills of these teams.

Next time, we will look at the ways real businesses with real PM issues have used technology to realize their strategic PPM goals. Our last white paper in this series, **How Real-life Companies Win the Resource Demand Planning Challenge** will help you navigate the new era of digital PM with solid skills, and provides an enhanced vision of your role in your organization's success.

About KeyedIn™ Solutions

KeyedIn Solutions is focused on helping organizations simplify processes, improve performance and drive results. The company's Cloud-based software systems not only offer greater flexibility, but effectively scale as business needs dictate and can be implemented quickly, delivering a measurable ROI months, or even years ahead of on-premise systems. And KeyedIn offers a true SaaS model, making its solutions affordable for every budget.

KeyedIn Projects, the company's project management suite, helps businesses and professional services organizations improve everything from project initiation to execution by managing programs based on top-line strategy and delivering profitable projects to the bottom line. KeyedIn Manufacturing is an ERP system that helps custom manufacturers work smarter so they can increase productivity and bring new products to market quickly, for a distinct competitive advantage. And when new solutions need to be developed quickly, KeyedIn clients turn to KeyedIn Konfigure, the company's rapid application development (RAD) platform for affordable applications designed just for them.

When businesses need results fast, they look to the Cloud – and turn to KeyedIn Solutions. You should too. Keep up with us at www.keyedin.com



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www.keyedin.com

Corporate Headquarters

5001 American Blvd West
Suite 1010
Minneapolis, MN 55437, USA
p +1 866 662 6820

EMEA Headquarters

Maple House
Woodland Park
West Yorkshire, BD19 6BW, UK
p +44 (0)1274 863300