

Citi's *PMO in a Box* Brings Consistency and Efficiency to Initiatives

by Dylan McGuire

While program management is important for aligning an organization's projects with its strategic goals in any industry, it is truly essential for a large, global organization such as Citi in the highly regulated world of finance.

A number of program managers work in Citi's Chief Technology Office and are responsible for optimizing the management of systems supporting global functions such as compliance, risk, and finance. They also introduce innovative technologies that provide new business capabilities.

These program managers discovered that there was not sufficient guidance on how key program management activities should be performed. In order to address these issues and maintain consistency, they decided to create Citi's own program management guide and accompanying training program based on the fundamental principles of program management outlined in PMI's *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*.

BACKGROUND

Citi is the world's largest financial services corporation with 16,000 offices and operations in more than 160 countries. It offers a comprehensive array of financial products and services for consumers, business, governments and institutions.

Due to the increasing demand of regulatory requirements in the financial services sector, banks typically launch new initiatives and programs in response to these legal and regulatory requirements. These initiatives also span global business sectors, regions, and other Project Management Offices (PMOs).

CHALLENGES

Several years ago, the Chief Technology Office did not have a centralized PMO in place but rather "initiative PMOs", which were typically made up of a group of consultants brought on for a specific period of time to help mobilize the initiative. While these "initiative PMOs" did the job, a lot of the knowledge gained was lost once these individuals rolled off the program.

Additionally, because each new initiative was launched differently and without a central PMO, the material was always recreated, taking months of effort and duplication. A lot of employees were either deployed to existing programs or lacked the in-depth experience needed to launch large, global and complex initiatives.

SOLUTIONS

Citi's* solution was to create a single resource—*PMO in a Box*—that would outline processes, in alignment with PMI's *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*. It would provide Citi's program managers with basic guidelines on key program management deliverables and behaviors.

While it provides guidelines on the majority of knowledge areas in the *PMBOK® Guide*, *PMO in a Box* emphasizes the five fundamentals of program management—scope, time, risk, issue and change management.

Because it is a large financial organization that is always audited, Citi has always had project and program procedures in place which represent the minimum requirements from a process and artifact perspective. However, *PMO in a Box* is supplemental document and provides additional guidance on how to do certain things. It goes beyond traditional standards and procedures—which tell employees what to do and when to do it in the program lifecycle—but not **how** to do it. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What elements should go into a program charter and why they are important
- Instructions and examples on how to create work breakdown structures
- Risk category examples and what constitutes a high, medium or low risk
- How program managers should handle dependencies in scheduling
- When program managers should use estimating and what techniques are the simplest and most effective
- When and how often the Program Manager should engage stakeholders
- The significance of escalation to senior management
- The importance of establishing change control at the start of a program

Essentially, *PMO in a Box* combines Citi's existing best practices along with critical program and project management processes to give Program Managers the tools and practices they need to efficiently manage a new program. By creating this additional guidance, Citi allows its program managers to stay focused on their client's needs and meeting regulatory commitments. *PMO in a Box* is also written to be applicable to all programs within Citi's organization, not just those implemented by the Chief Technology Office.

RESULTS

Citi implemented *PMO in a Box* in 2011 with approximately 100 program managers in the Chief Technology Office as part of its "Project Management Awareness Week". Since then, it has seen a noticeable improvement in delivering its program goals and objectives on time and on budget. Additionally, governance and escalation models have improved communication and resulted in less surprises to senior management.

Citi also reports that its program managers are using some of the *PMO in a Box* examples, such as work breakdown structures and program plans, containing realistic estimates, more frequently and consistently. The program managers are now formally documenting changes to program scope along with impacts to schedule and budget prior to implementation.

PMO in a Box has received many positive reviews, Citi reports, and it plans to train all the program and project managers within its organization on it in the near future.