

How to enhance role and responsibilities of managers in Head Office despite their projects being offshored to the Offshore Center^{1, 2}

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A large number of global companies are running Offshore Centers in distant countries. These companies have augmented their project teams in their global Head Office (HO) with the Offshore Center teams. The projects are distributed across the Offshore Center and HO, with the Offshore Center managers and HO managers leading the project teams to deliver on the project objectives.

In the absence of an Offshore Center, the managers in HO manage large projects with large directly reporting team sizes in the HO. However, as the company starts its Offshore Center, it offshores some of these projects. As time progresses, more projects with larger team sizes are offshored because of the advantage of lower cost of executing projects in the Offshore Center.

Initially, the managers in HO directly control the Offshore Center project teams working on their globally distributed projects. As the project size and project team size increases, the Offshore Center components of these distributed projects are managed by local managers in the Offshore Center. Over a period of time, the Offshore Center teams and managers gain in expertise and experience in executing projects. The company then decides that some of its projects will be executed totally within the Offshore Center and will be independently managed by local managers in the Offshore Center.

However, giving more responsibilities to the Offshore Center managers may possibly dilute the authority and responsibilities of the HO managers. The HO managers end up managing much smaller teams in the HO. These HO managers feel that their authority and span of control over the teams has been significantly reduced. They start feeling insecure about slowly losing all their projects and all their authority to the Offshore Center management.

We suggest that these insecurities of the HO managers should be addressed by assigning them new and additional offshoring-related role and responsibilities. The suggested techniques can not only prevent dilution of the authority and responsibilities of the HO managers but can also make their role more critical to the company and can significantly enhance their contributions, even

¹ This article is excerpted from author's book "*Leading and Motivating Global Teams: Integrating Offshore Centers and the Head Office*" published by CRC Press – USA (Taylor and Francis Group)

https://www.amazon.com/Leading-Motivating-Global-Teams-Integrating-dp-1498784747/dp/1498784747/ref=mt_hardcover?_encoding=UTF8&me=&qid=1490733202

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compared to the earlier role being played by them in the absence of the projects being offshored to the Offshore Center.

Let us consider the case of a global product development company with an Offshore Center. The product features are decided by the company's Product Management team. The product management team interfaces with the key customers of the company to understand their pain-points and requirements, to decide the right set of features for the product. Since most of the key customers of the product are typically based in the country of the HO, the product management team is also based in the HO of the company.

Some components of the product are developed by executing independent projects in the Offshore Center that are managed totally by local managers. Although the Offshore Center manager of an independent project will have the management expertise and experience to deliver on it, it should be noted that the company's product management team and key customers are still based in the HO.

HO project managers are based in the same location as the product management team. These HO managers have been managing projects in the HO (for developing company's products) for many years and have learned techniques to work closely with the product management team.

We suggest that this expertise, experience, and location strength of an HO manager should be utilized by assigning him or her the role of being a "Project Coordinator" for a completely offshored independent project, in addition to his or her responsibility of managing his or her current project in the HO. The HO manager then becomes the interface for the Offshore Center manager with the HO product management team and key customers for this independent project.

The HO manager is made responsible for performing the following tasks for the project:

- Work closely with the product management team to develop deep understanding of the product features.
- Work with product management team and the Offshore Center manager to decide the scope of the current project release, in terms of selecting the subset of high-priority features to be implemented based on the available time and resources for the release.
- Share any ongoing project requirement changes information regularly to the Offshore Center manager by interfacing with the product management team.
- Help and support the Offshore Center manager in ensuring that the final project is delivered as per the project specifications.

Thus, the HO manager will now be reassured that since he or she is now handling an additional role, he or she is handling critical responsibilities for the company. He or she was earlier managing only a single project. He or she will realize that his or her contributions are now more valuable

than before, since he or she now has *critical roles* to play in *multiple projects*. He or she will not feel insecure about his or her job, despite his or her small direct reporting team size.

Note: We have used the “manager” as a generic term that can imply managers at various levels of the management hierarchy, like Project Manager, Senior Project Manager, Engineering Director, Senior Engineering Director, etc.

About the Author



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Vimal Kumar Khanna is the Founder and Managing Director of *mCalibre Technologies*. He has more than 34 years of industry experience. He has won multiple international honors for his contributions to the management and technology domains - being listed in *Marquis Who's Who in the World* and being Honorary Editor of *IEEE Communications*. He is the author of Amazon #1 Best Seller Book "Leading and Motivating Global Teams: Integrating Offshore Centers and the Head Office" published by CRC Press – USA (Taylor & Francis group). His sole-authored papers have been published in leading global refereed journals, magazines, and conferences. He is a frequent speaker at Project Management Institute (PMI) Global Congresses—North America, EMEA, and APAC. He is a frequent contributor to multiple PMI official global publications - *PM Network* and *PMI E-Link*.