

## On Whatever Happened to Organizational PM Maturity<sup>1</sup>

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

26 October 2020

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Thank you for raising this topic, David. It is an important and very timely topic.

I regularly speak and work with C-suite executives and their project-related functionaries who are searching for ways to increase productivity and predictability in project-based strategies. These executives **always** mention the concept of maturity - that their people and processes need to be more mature. A simple statement yet what does it mean? And what does it take to address maturity and increase productivity and predictability?

Before answering these questions, I will point out a few things: 1) PMI's OPM3, which has been adopted by all kinds of organizations around the world, was developed by thousands of professionals and updated several times to enable executives to increase their organizations' maturity, productivity, and predictability in Organizational Project Management; 2) PMI tried to commercialize OPM3 for its own benefit, making it difficult for some and impossible for many to use OPM3. This ended with PMI writing off a large loss and perhaps not coincidentally, its President, Mark Langley, resigning; and 3) PMI and most of the rest of the world became enamored, like magpies, with the shiny object – Agile. It was and is right to bring Agile approaches, methods, practices and the like into the mainstream, yet in doing so people seemed to lose sight of or heavily discount the relationships between maturity on the one hand, and productivity and predictability on the other.

It is naïve to conclude that an organization must be at the highest level of maturity in all areas as every organization is different. Rather, each organization should be mature enough to know what maturity looks like and where and how it needs to become MORE mature. Again, a simple statement but incredibly challenging in practice. This is where models such as OPM3 help. OPM3's Capability Statements suggest what process and related maturities look like. In the

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hands of a skilled practitioner, an organization can learn where it needs to mature to become more productive and predictable.

Recently PMI helped create Disciplined Agile Delivery (DAD). This is yet another framework for improving productivity and predictability. It does not replace earlier frameworks; rather, it complements and supplements earlier frameworks. At its heart, DAD is yet another way to think about and do project-based strategy implementation, i.e. Organizational Project Management (OPM). If OPM3's Capability Statements were available to organizations adopting DAD, they could use OPM3 to increase maturity and perform DAD more successfully, consistently, and predictably.

"Ways of Working" is becoming popular. It is essentially about working in ways that result in maximum productivity (and business value) and predictability. Using Agile one could experiment until they eventually figure out what way of working is the best, or if they were already mature and had the knowledge and experience (or a consultant who could figure this out for them), there would be little or no experimenting – they would quickly embrace the best way of working.

So here we have gone full circle. Back to OPM. OPM is the overarching concept that includes and integrates portfolio, program, and project management. OPM embraces different portfolio management approaches (whether BSC, MoP, SFPfM or others); it embraces different program management approaches (whether MSP, AgilePgM, or others); and it embraces all manner of project delivery approaches (whether predictive, iterative, incremental, or adaptive approaches including Agile and Agile frameworks such as DAD, XP, DM, and on and on). OPM3, while not perfect, is a very useful model and tool to assess and help one to figure out where and how to mature, and to what level to mature one's OPM systems (when one uses the OPM3 Capability Statements which, sadly, PMI is not currently making available to its members).

My hope is that PMI realizes that OPM is the overarching concept, and that resuscitating and refreshing OPM3 is an important step to maximizing productivity and predictability through the lenses of projects, programs, and portfolios. As I lead up to my CALL TO ACTION, I will share some 'head-scratching'.

- 1) OPM3 was the first standard not only in PMI but in the entire world to propose the formal integration of project, program, and portfolio management as a standard, and the integration of these three domains continues to be the de facto global standard for project-based strategy worldwide.
- 2) OPM3 was PMI's first standard to articulate how portfolio management should be done, and it inspired the creation of PMI's Standard of Portfolio Management.
- 3) OPM3 was one of four "foundational" standards for PMI and held that status for well over a decade.
- 4) PMI removed from OPM3 the Capability Statements, Outcome Statements, and KPI's (which was the core content of the OPM3 standard) and made that content the basis of a failed PMI

software product named ProductSuite, which was the basis of an expensive certification scheme. At that point, the OPM3 Capability Statements, Outcome Statements, and KPI's were *officially no longer part of any PMI standard.*

- 5) PMI created a separate "Standard for Organizational Project Management," which replaced OPM3 as a foundational standard without any formal announcement of this change. PMI also created a "Practice Guide" titled "Implementing Organizational Project Management: A Practice Guide." There was never any effort to update either OPM3 or these other two standards to integrate or even align their content with each other.
- 6) Recently OPM3 was removed from pmi.org altogether without any formal announcement of this change. No other PMI standard has received this treatment. If one wishes to purchase any other PMI standard that is no longer being updated, you can do so through pmi.org. If you try to purchase OPM3 on pmi.org, you cannot find it.

My CALL TO ACTION is simple: PMI release OPM3's Capability Statements, Outcome Statements, and KPI's to the public. Better yet, PMI charter a new project to update this material so users can apply it to help organizations adopt other PMI standards such as PMI's Standard for Portfolio Management, Standard for Program Management, PMBOK Guide, Disciplined Agile Delivery, etc.

Best regards,

Peter Rogers

Atlanta, Georgia, USA