

Interview with Joe Pusz¹

Author, Innovator, Popular Speaker
2022 Americas PMO Influencer of the Year
Founder/President, The PMO Squad
Phoenix, Arizona, USA



Interviewed by Ipek Sahra Ozguler

International Correspondent, PM World Journal
Istanbul, Turkey

Introduction to the interviewee

Joe Pusz is an internationally recognized leader in the Project Management and PMO communities. He is a frequent Keynote Speaker, Author, Project Management Innovator and was named the 2022 Americas PMO Influencer of the Year by the PMO Global Alliance. Joe speaks on topics of Leadership, PMOs, Purpose Driven Mindset, the Organizational Project Delivery Journey, and a variety of other trending Project Management topics.

He is the Founder and President of [THE PMO SQUAD](#), a Phoenix-based PMO and Project Management Consulting firm serving clients across the United States. The PMO Squad was named Winner 2022 Small Business Awards by the Phoenix Business Journal. Joe is the host of the [Project Management Office Hours Radio Show](#) and Podcast providing Project Management Leaders a voice within our community. The show has over 40 million plays and downloads featuring guests from around the world.

Joe is also Co-Founder of [VPMMA](#), the Veteran Project Manager Mentor Alliance which

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is a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization assisting Veterans seeking to transition into civilian Project Management careers. He is the Founder of [The PMO Leader](#) global community. The community is the only global e-commerce community for PMO Leaders and teams to share content, gain knowledge, and exchange experiences.

Joe supports our industry having served as a Judge for the Global PMO Awards, participates with the PMI Executive Roundtable on PMOs, and is a long-time member of the Project Management Institute. He has been a PMI Volunteer, Sponsor, and Mentor.

Interview

Ipek Sahra Ozguler (Ozguler): *First of all, thank you for accepting the interview invitation of PMWJ. Could you please introduce yourself for us?*

Joe Pusz (Pusz): My pleasure and thank you, Ipek, for inviting me to participate in this interview. I'm the CEO of The PMO Squad; we're a US-based Project and PMO Consulting firm. I've been in the PM/PMO industry for almost 25 years now across several industries. Ultimately, I've reached a point in my career where my focus now is simply, how can I help you deliver projects better.

Ozguler: *A 2024 PMO Research Report (<https://www.thepmosquad.com/2024-pmo-research-report/>) was conducted by The PMO Squad, a full service PMO and Project Management consulting firm. Could you give a brief information about the key insights from report?*

Pusz: There were several key insights found in the 2024 PMO Research Report. The key statistics I would highlight include:

- 93% of PMOs not supported by executives say executives lack understanding of the value of a PMO
- 70% of PMOs don't have a formal process around assessing value
- 61% of PMOs cite themselves as successful
- 50% of PPM tool features are actually being used by organizations

So, what do those 4 items add up to? First, organizations are not doing a good job with project delivery. There isn't one specific area for improvement, it is across the board. From PMOs, to technology, to training, and beyond. In the project economy when the spotlight is shining on projects more brightly than ever before we need to do better. Executives expect us to perform better and many PMO leaders are uncertain how to do just that.

Ozguler: *What are top challenges facing Project Management Offices (PMOs) in 2024? How do PMO leaders overcome these challenges?*

Pusz: There were three main challenges cited for PMOs in the 2024 PMO Research

Report. The top challenge for PMOs was measuring performance and delivering value followed by aligning PMO with organizational goals and then change management.

PMOs can overcome these challenges by improving upon organizational acceptance and capability to deliver projects. Project delivery shouldn't be a project management function only, project delivery should be an organizational function and without the organization's acceptance of what project delivery looks like – it's not set up for success across the board.

The PMO plays a crucial role in acknowledging this and making strides toward an organization-wide approach to project delivery through acceptance and capability – not PMO maturity.

Ozguler: *It is stated “as an industry, we’ve been focused on ensuring processes are at the forefront of everything we do, but how effective have we been at integrating those processes in our organizations”. How does an organization achieve this?*

Pusz: Based on the data, 33% of organizations have fully or mostly integrated their project management processes. The Organizational Project Delivery Journey that The PMO Squad has introduced is a Systems Dynamics based approach to delivering projects through the organization.

A key component of this approach is addressed when an organization transitions from Stage 2 – Standardized Project Delivery to Stage 3 – Organizational Project Delivery. For 33% of organizations, they've figured out this transition, but for the other 67% they have not. This is accomplished when the project delivery team is no longer focused on themselves, but on the organization as a whole and how the entire organization should approach project delivery.

It starts with the recognition of the standardization that has happened within the project delivery teams but is then accepted across the entire organization as the standard practice for the organization not just the project delivery team. This shift is crucial to ensuring the most effective organizational project delivery outcomes.

Ozguler: *Based on the report, in what ways do PMOs contribute to the organizations?*

Pusz: Based on responses from the Research Report, the top four ways in which PMOs contribute value to their organizations today include 1) streamlining processes, 2) enhancing stakeholder communication and engagement, 3) strategic alignment and 4) improving delivery timelines.

These aren't surprising, but the caution here is that 70% of project professionals cite they don't have a formal process to assess and measure that value within their organization. Something that as part of The Organizational Project Delivery Journey becomes important toward Stage 4 and Stage 5 of the journey once the organization has accepted what organizational project delivery looks like.

Ozguler: *What level of support do PMOs receive from executives?*

Pusz: As far as executive support I think it's important to outline the overarching statistic of 37% have full or high support for their PMO, but it's far more interesting to look at the breakdown of 'Why'.

For PMOs that do receive executive support, the data shows that executives see the PMO aligned with strategic goals, providing visibility of project successes, are effectively communicating value and have strong PMO leadership.

For those PMOs not receiving support, an overwhelming 93% say that the executives don't understand the value of PMOs. Also, PMOs not receiving executive support say executives have had previous negative experiences with PMOs or the PMO has competing priorities to the organizations.

Back to what I mentioned earlier around the PMO should not be focused on the PMO, it should be focused on the organization. This shift in mindset allows for the good things to fall into place.

Ozguler: *It is stated that the PMO leaders need to be able to answer three critical questions in alignment with executives. Why does your PMO exist? How does your PMO provide value? How does your PMO stay relevant? Please answer these questions from your perspective.*

Pusz: There isn't a singular answer for these questions. Why the PMO exists is unique to each organization. One business may need a PMO focused on compliance while another requires execution and delivery. To solve for this, The PMO Squad established our Purpose Driven PMO approach which places Purpose at the center of PMO creation and delivery.

With Purpose being unique for each PMO, how do you provide value also becomes unique. In the example above, a PMO focused on compliance may demonstrate value through high audit scores or limited impact from fines or regulation. Each PMO Leader should be equipped to understand their Purpose and how they will delivery value back to the organization.

Lastly, staying relevant is the key to sustainability for PMOs around the world. In March of 2020 PMO relevancy changed due to COVID. Pre-covid your PMO may have been focused on compliance. Once covid hit and executives around the world demanded work at home solutions and digital transformation, execution was required to stay relevant. Define your PMO Purpose. Understand what needs to be measured for value generation. Optimize your systems to ensure your alignment with the organization is in place. These are the key concepts in the Purpose Driven PMO.

Ozguler: *What are top challenges for Project Management Talent Acquisition?*

Pusz: This was an interesting part of the Report. We haven't seen many similar reports

with any focus on talent acquisition. The top challenge at 48% of organizations say that they have limited access to skill professionals.

The next two challenges were geographical challenges and high competition. Now, this may be surprising as another statistic highlighted in the report is that 73% of organizations say remote resources can do the job as effectively as on-site resources. However, this has opened an opportunity for organizations to leverage the “as a service” model with 77% of organizations citing they use temporary project management resources – what we call, PMO as a Service (PMOaaS).

Much like other “As a Service” offerings we’re more familiar with such as Payroll as a Service, Software as a Service, and Infrastructure as a Service, PMOaaS allows organizations to leverage a partner to increase project delivery capabilities of non-core competencies within the business. This can be accomplished through streamlining of talent acquisition processes, project delivery process improvements, technology utilization and a host of other capabilities offered within PMOaaS. These challenges are easily reduced when leveraging this type of service.

Ozguler: *Could you please give more information about the Organizational Project Delivery Journey?*

Pusz: The Organizational Project Delivery (OPD) Journey from The PMO Squad is a System Dynamics based approach to delivering projects throughout the organization. Traditional project delivery methodologies and frameworks are simply not meeting expectations. The simple, linear, open loop processes are not robust enough for the acceleration of change that’s happening in organizations. OPD is an approach to project delivery focused on organizational capability and acceptance.

Projects are complex and organizations are complex. OPD is an approach that specifically accounts for those complexities to utilize feedback to inform the systems and then establish organization capability to deliver projects in our rapidly changing world.

The Organizational Project Delivery Journey is unique for every organization – it’s not a cookie cutter model. This is intentional because every organization is different, but the shift in mindset required for OPD is that project delivery is no longer about project management, it’s no longer about the PMO, it’s about the ORGANIZATION’s capability and acceptance to deliver projects.

Ozguler: *Thank you for sharing your time and perspectives with PMWJ readers.*

About the Interviewer



Ipek Sahra Ozguler

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Ipek Sahra Ozguler graduated from the Istanbul University, Turkey with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University, Turkey with an MSc degree in Software Management. As a project manager, she has more than 13 years of experience in various areas such as portfolio management, program management, project management, software management, business analysis. She became a certified PMP in 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014.

She has gained broader insights in a variety of projects across manufacturing, defence, FMCG (Cola Cola), insurance (Euler Hermes), audit (Deloitte), telecommunication, aviation and finance sectors. In addition, she has been working as an international correspondent for the PM World Journal since 2014.

Ipek is the creator and editor of the highly acclaimed book, [The Perspective of Women Project Management Professionals](#), interviews with leading female PM experts and professionals around the world. The book was published in March 2020 and is available [here](#).

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