

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New PMI Research Reveals Strategy-Execution Gap Is Undermining Transformation – And How to Close It

Global study of 5,800+ professionals shows only half of projects succeed; the M.O.R.E. approach from Project Management Institute, more than triples success rates in a world of constant reinvention

PHILADELPHIA – December 11, 2025 – Project Management Institute (PMI) today released new research that directly links the global strategy-execution gap to how organizations run projects, revealing a clear pathway to dramatically improve the odds that transformation efforts actually pay off.

The report, [*Step Up: Redefining the Path to Project Success with M.O.R.E.*](#), arrives as CEOs face unrelenting pressure to reinvent their organizations at a rapid pace. In a companion survey of senior executives, 93% say they must rethink or reinvent their business model or operating approach at least every five years, with nearly two-thirds doing so every two years or more frequently. Two-thirds report they are currently accelerating digital and AI transformation.

Yet their biggest obstacle is not a lack of ideas, capital, or technology – it is a widening strategy-execution gap. The top barrier to reinvention, cited by more executives than any other factor (35%), is a **disconnect between planning and execution**.

Only half of projects succeed – and that puts transformation at risk

The new global study of more than 5,800 project professionals, key stakeholders, and knowledge workers finds that just half of projects today meet a modern definition of success: delivering value that exceeds the effort and expense involved, as perceived by all key stakeholders. Thirteen percent of projects fail outright and 37% only partially deliver the expected results.

“At a time when organizations are pouring unprecedented investment into digital, AI, sustainability, and business model transformation, they simply cannot afford a 50/50 success rate on the projects that fund their strategy,” said **Pierre Le Manh, President & Chief Executive Officer at PMI**. “Our research makes it clear: the strategy-execution gap isn’t abstract. It shows up in the day-to-day reality of projects that are misaligned, under-resourced, or measured in the wrong way.”

Le Manh added: “When executives say their biggest challenge is turning plans into outcomes, what they are really describing is project success. If you want your strategy to work, you have to radically increase the hit rate of the projects that bring it to life.”

The M.O.R.E. vision for the project profession: from project management to value delivery

To understand what separates high-performing organizations, the study identifies four elements that strongly predict whether projects deliver full value. Together, they form the basis of **M.O.R.E.** – a call-to-action for the project profession:

- **Manage perceptions** by shaping stakeholder understanding and building trust
- **Own success** beyond traditional metrics of time and budget, focusing on value delivered
- **Relentlessly reassess** to anticipate change and continuously adjust
- **Expand perspective** to connect projects to broader organizational and societal outcomes

When project professionals apply all four elements, project performance improves dramatically. Net Project Success Score – the percentage of successful projects minus the percentage of outright failures – jumps from **27** when none of the M.O.R.E. elements are used to **94** when all four are consistently applied. Yet only **7%** of professionals say they are using all four today.

“These findings give executives something they’ve been missing: a practical, evidence-based playbook for closing the strategy-execution gap,” said Le Manh. “M.O.R.E. reframes project success around value, outcomes, and stakeholder perception. It moves project leaders from ‘task execution’ to true ownership of transformation.”

AI, agility, and the human side of execution

The CEO research underscores that structural barriers – not intent – are slowing progress. Executives report that outdated skills, rigid structures, fragmented accountability, and overly centralized decision-making all make it harder to adapt quickly. Many say their organizations are clear on purpose, but their operating models and governance are not designed to reallocate capital and talent quickly enough.

At the same time, AI looms large in reinvention plans: 72% of executives cite AI and automation as a primary driver pushing them to rethink their business model and operating approach. The research confirms the powerful role AI can play in boosting project success when coupled with the human skills that guide it. According to the study, professionals who integrate AI tools into their workflows see a 17-point increase in success.

“AI will only create value if organizations can translate bold ideas into executed initiatives,” Le Manh said. “Our data shows that when professionals blend AI tools with the human strengths captured in M.O.R.E. – communication, judgement, adaptability, leadership – project success significantly improves. That’s where the real competitive advantage lies.”

From research insight to global movement

PMI is embedding M.O.R.E. across its products, learning experiences, and community initiatives to help organizations and professionals apply the findings at scale. This includes:

- New learning journeys and resources centered on the M.O.R.E. behaviors
- Updated standards and guidance that define project success in terms of value and stakeholder outcomes
- Expanded recognition of project teams that exemplify the M.O.R.E. mindset in delivering complex, high-impact work

“As reinvention becomes a permanent condition, project success is no longer a technical topic for specialists. It is a board-level imperative,” Le Manh said. “Closing the strategy-execution gap starts

with how you define, lead, and measure projects. M.O.R.E. gives organizations a way to do that consistently.”

Read the full **Step Up: Redefining the Path to Project Success with M.O.R.E.** report and explore the data [HERE](#).

Survey Methodology

The **Step Up: Redefining the Path to Project Success with M.O.R.E.** report reflects insights from more than 5,800 project professionals, key stakeholders, and knowledge workers across global industries and sectors, collected in partnership with independent research firm Kantar.

The **2025 CEO Quant Survey** includes responses from 300 senior executives across regions and industries. The study examines how frequently organizations must reinvent their business models and operating approaches, what is driving this reinvention, and the primary barriers to executing strategy at speed.

About PMI

PMI is the leading authority in project management, dedicated to guiding the way to project success. Since 1969, PMI has shone a light on the power of project management and the people behind the projects. With a global community, gold-standard professional certifications, and career-long learning opportunities, PMI empowers current and aspiring project professionals, as well as organizations, with knowledge and resources to lead effectively and create an impact in the communities they serve. Join PMI in elevating our world – one project at a time.

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