

Resulting  
IT

# The 7 HABITS of HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SAP PMOs



If you run SAP, life can be tough.

You've got challenging delivery schedules, high stakes business cases, and a crucial transformation agenda.

You're doing things that require the orchestration of people, partners, stakeholders, the balancing of priorities, and the constant re-prioritisation of activities and plans.

You're working right on the edge.

The glue that holds all of this together is an exceptional PMO.

In 1989, Stephen Covey wrote "The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People".

It served as a bible to teach ambitious people ways to be successful through independence, interdependence and continual improvement.

The book sold 25 million copies worldwide and Covey was invited to meet then President Bill Clinton to share his ideas - so it's safe to say he knew what he was talking about.

We've shamelessly stolen his title and created our own version for Highly Successful PMOs - with a nod to Covey's insightful and inspiring quotes.

Enjoy.



“

What is common sense isn't  
common practice

”

Stephen R. Covey - The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People



## 1. Everyone knows what a great PMO does

Like any other role, the PMO needs a clear remit to be successful.

So you start with a RACI, right? Or a RASCI?

No. Don't start there.

This might sound obvious, but you'd be surprised how often common sense gets thrown out the window on an SAP project - especially when it comes to the role of the PMO.

Given the broad range of responsibilities a PMO can take on and how different the role can be from project to project, it's easy for things to get confusing for everyone.

And, even if the PMO knows their role, there are dozens, even hundreds of other people working on the project too, and they all need to know what the PMO is there to do.

So how do you decide what's in the PMOs remit?



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## 3 things in the PMOs remit

### Project Plan and keeping things tracked

Great delivery requires the overall team to be productive and efficient, which relies on co-ordination and communication. The PMO can take ownership of this, keeping tasks, milestones and statuses in check and on-track.

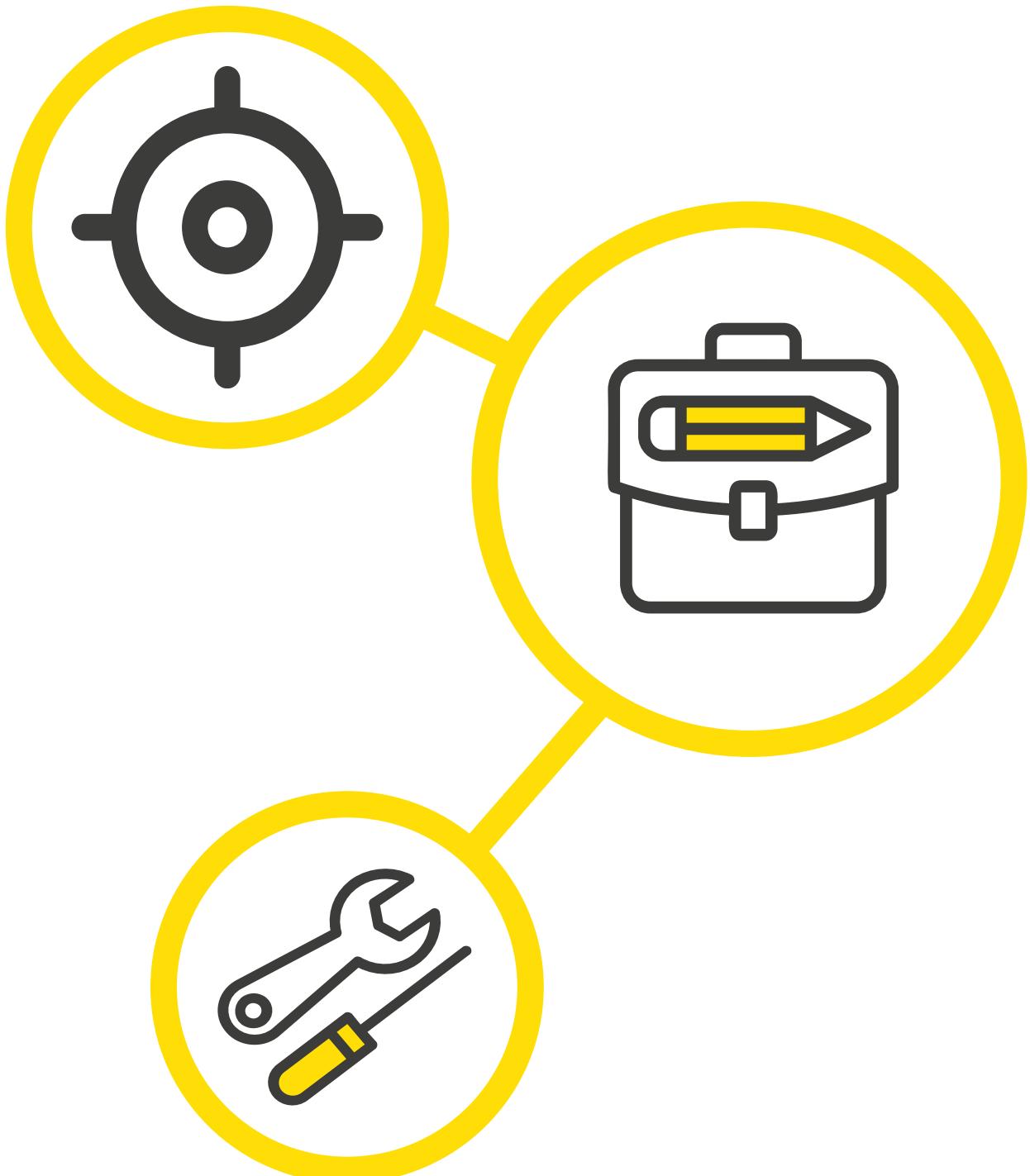
### Portfolio Control

If you have multiple projects ongoing at the same time, allowing your PMO to work across them all can be beneficial. It's easy for people working on a single project to forget the macro picture of business goals. Giving Portfolio Control to the PMO can help multiple projects work together better because dependencies get managed centrally - which helps everyone.

### Processes and Tools

Someone has to own the processes and tools that are needed for your project to run smoothly. That someone is the PMO. By making sure things like SharePoint and MS Project are delivering, the PMO furnishes the Project Team with the tools and ways-of-working needed for SAP success.

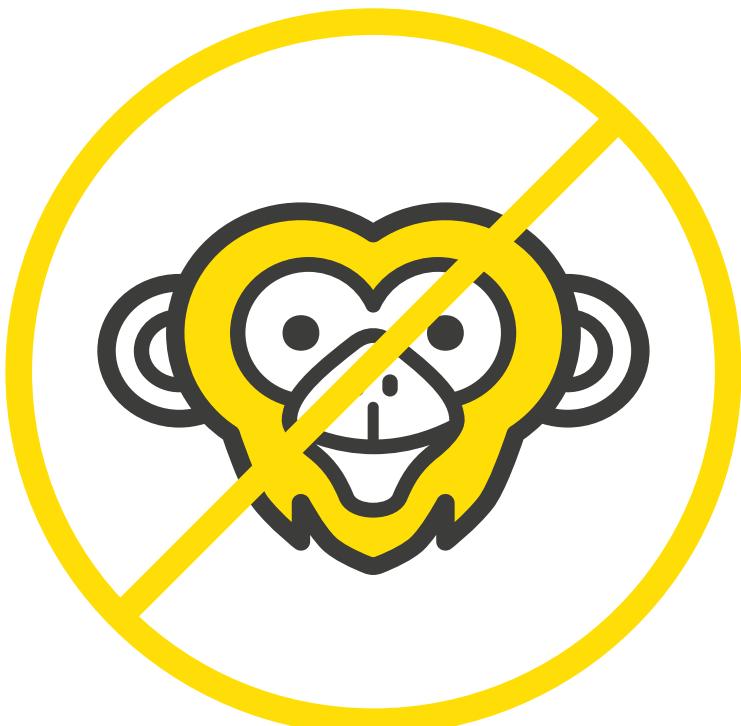
That's a list of some of the things that a good PMO can do to support your project, but it's just as important to understand what a PMO is not. Make this clear from the outset to define the PMO's remit and give the PMO the authority it deserves.



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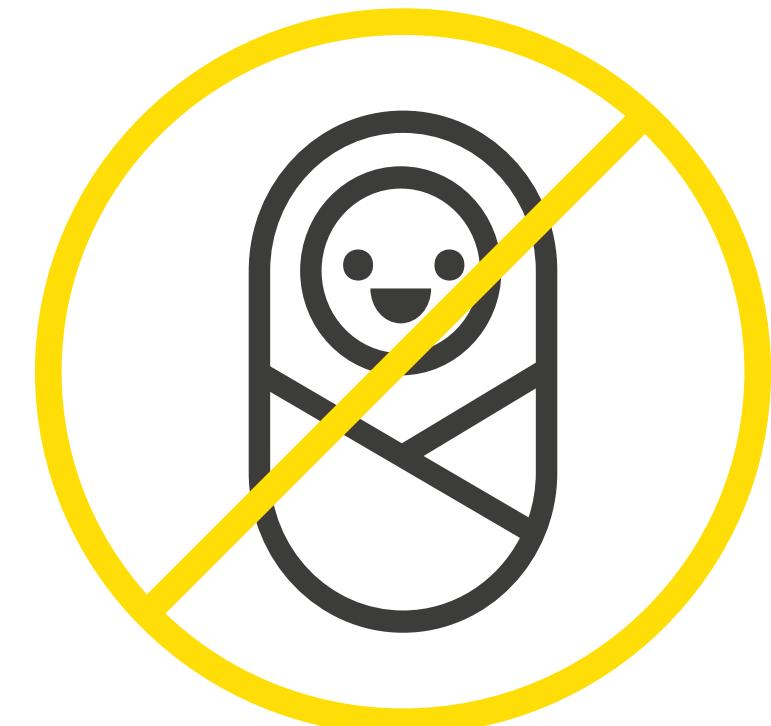
As a starter for 10, the PMO is not:

**A troop of Personal Assistants or admin monkeys**



**A surrogate Project Manager**

They can't help the project without direction and leadership



**There to run your business**

They work on the project, not BAU activities





## Putting it into practice

Top tips for PMO prowess from a Resulting PMO Lead

### Tip 1 – Proper Document Management

"Proper document management is a must in any implementation.

A common tool used for this is SharePoint, an integrated one stop shop for deliverable creation, storage and tracking.

For the PMO to keep track of the status of a document lifecycle in real time, is it crucial that owners make these updates.

It is often an issue that document owners do not make changes and expect the PMO to update things on their behalf. This is sometimes down to lack of knowledge and other times down to presumptions that this is the role of the PMO.

To stop this happening, it is important that the PMO provides a 'demo', showing best practice and clearly stating that this is the responsibility of the deliverable owner. Another good practice is to share a 'how to guide'.

That way everyone has it written down on paper how things should be managed, and can't make the excuse that they thought it wasn't their responsibility . "

**Leanne O'Wellen**  
SAP PMO Consultant - Resulting IT





## Putting it into practice

Top tips for PMO prowess from a Resulting PMO Lead

### Tip 2 – Defining the PMO's remit

"Defining the PMO's remit starts with nailing down the job description. You need this to effectively resource the right people for the job, but it's also good to have on paper for everyone to see.

RACIs can be helpful too - but there's nothing worse than a detailed RACI that nobody understands or follows.

Keeping things simple is key! Only provide the information that is required at a quick glance – anything more is overkill. Sticking to one page makes things easily digestible. A table format is a good form to use - it's simple and straight to the point.

Avoid adding multiple levels of detail to one task. If further details are required, approach the 'Responsible' team members for information.

Also, maintaining the 'life cycle' of a RACI is key. This means updating things when resource changes are made and also informing team members about these changes. When the RACI is heavily relied upon for clarification the PMO must ensure it is as accurate as possible. There should only ever be one source of the truth – your well-kept RACI is it.

But remember, don't rely too heavily on the RACI. Even though the RACI is a really useful document, they don't get read half as often as they should. You may need to develop other methods alongside the RACI to help explain to the masses who is responsible for what."

**Avtar Davatwal**  
SAP PMO Consultant - Resulting IT



“ It's amazing how confused  
and distracted and misdirected  
so many people are. ”

Stephen R. Covey - The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People

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## 2. Great PMOs communicate exceptionally

If you've worked as part of a PMO you probably know it can be a bit like herding cats.

Cats are pretty stupid. And, they don't speak a word of English, French, or any other language that you might try and use to coerce them.

Basically, unless there's a tin of mackerel involved you're on course for massive communication breakdown.

And, bad communication is the enemy of good project management - so it's the PMO's job to make sure communication works on SAP projects.



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## Lost in translation

An SAP project is pretty unique in business as it transcends departmental boundaries like nothing else. There's jargon flying around - technical geekery and business bullshit.

You have Systems Integrators with their language and methods. Your staff are faced with a plethora of new things that make them feel like they've been abducted - stuff they've never heard of before let alone been asked to deliver.

It's all a very strange dynamic.

This can be a problem.

Without someone there to do the refereeing and translating a project can quickly breakdown.

A good PMO will prevent this communication breakdown - even if it means brokering difficult conversations or delivering bad news.

With everyone fighting for their little bit of the air-time, it is the PMO's job to make sure everything is done fairly, properly, and that the project continues to move forward, regardless of what challenges, misunderstandings and disagreements may emerge.





## Putting it into practice

Top tips for PMO prowess from a Resulting PMO Lead

"We are all human and sometimes we don't see eye to eye. It's sometimes the responsibility of the PMO to act as a mediator in certain scenarios where communication has broken down on a project.

Scope can and will alter throughout a project and this can result in an increased workload to a particular workstream.

When going off piste it's common for workstreams to argue over whose responsibility it is to get the new work done – after all, who wants a surprise load of work to deal with when you thought the pain was nearly over.

This confusion can be down to lack of understanding or added pressure to an already boiling pot. To eradicate the tension and lack of ownership, the PMO should provide a forum for all involved parties to air their concerns and come to an agreement. Then the PMO can devise a plan to spread the work in a way that is fair, equal and effective.

Sometimes something as simple as organising a meeting and providing a sense of empathy and understanding can work wonders to ease tension between colleagues."

**Helen Collinson**  
SAP PMO Consultant - Resulting IT



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## Consistent reporting

Without good feedback we can end up in some sticky situations.

For example;

- Without bank statements you could spend all your money,
- Without a fuel gauge you could run out of petrol,
- Without friends to rein you in you might spend £1,000 on shoes, cats or shoes for cats.

All worth avoiding.

By providing consistent reporting, the PMO can make sure that an SAP project doesn't run into problems.

Regardless of how the project is being run, it's the PMO's job to collect information about the project's performance and communicate it to the right people at the right time - and it's this part that's key.

It's easy to get bogged down in the process of reporting and miss the time to act. A good PMO doesn't just make reporting happen - it makes sure reports are acted on.





## Putting it into practice

Top tips for PMO prowess from a Resulting PMO Lead

"One of the main things you should be focused on is if you are on track to plan in terms of activity and deliverable completion.

This is by far the most important thing for a PMO to be reporting on as without this information it will be unclear if you will meet your target go-live date. How you should report this information really depends on the audience, for example whether you're reporting to the Project Team members or to the programme board.

When reporting to the Project Team it is much more beneficial to provide a one page overview of where you are using a visual representation such a RAG status. The more red you see the worse a position you're in.

When reporting to stakeholders and the board you need to get to a granular level which can be a lengthy PowerPoint presentation. The PMO needs the skills to:

- 1) Read the audience
- 2) Present reporting in the best way for that audience
- 3) Always have a plan B!"

**Leanne O'Wellen**  
SAP PMO Consultant - Resulting IT



“ What we are communicates far more eloquently than anything we say or do ”

Stephen R. Covey - The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People

### 3. Relating to the right people, right

Who does the PMO work for?

Hmmm, that's a tricky question.

At times the PMO sits at the Project Manager's right hand, helping them with anything they need. But the PMO also reports back up the line to senior management and key stakeholders.

PMO is a central, pivotal role. Everyone has to interact with the PMO in some way - and it's not always convivial. PMOs can be the bearer of bad news, the harbingers of doom, the red RAG to your workstream bulls.

So great relationships are critical to a successful PMO.

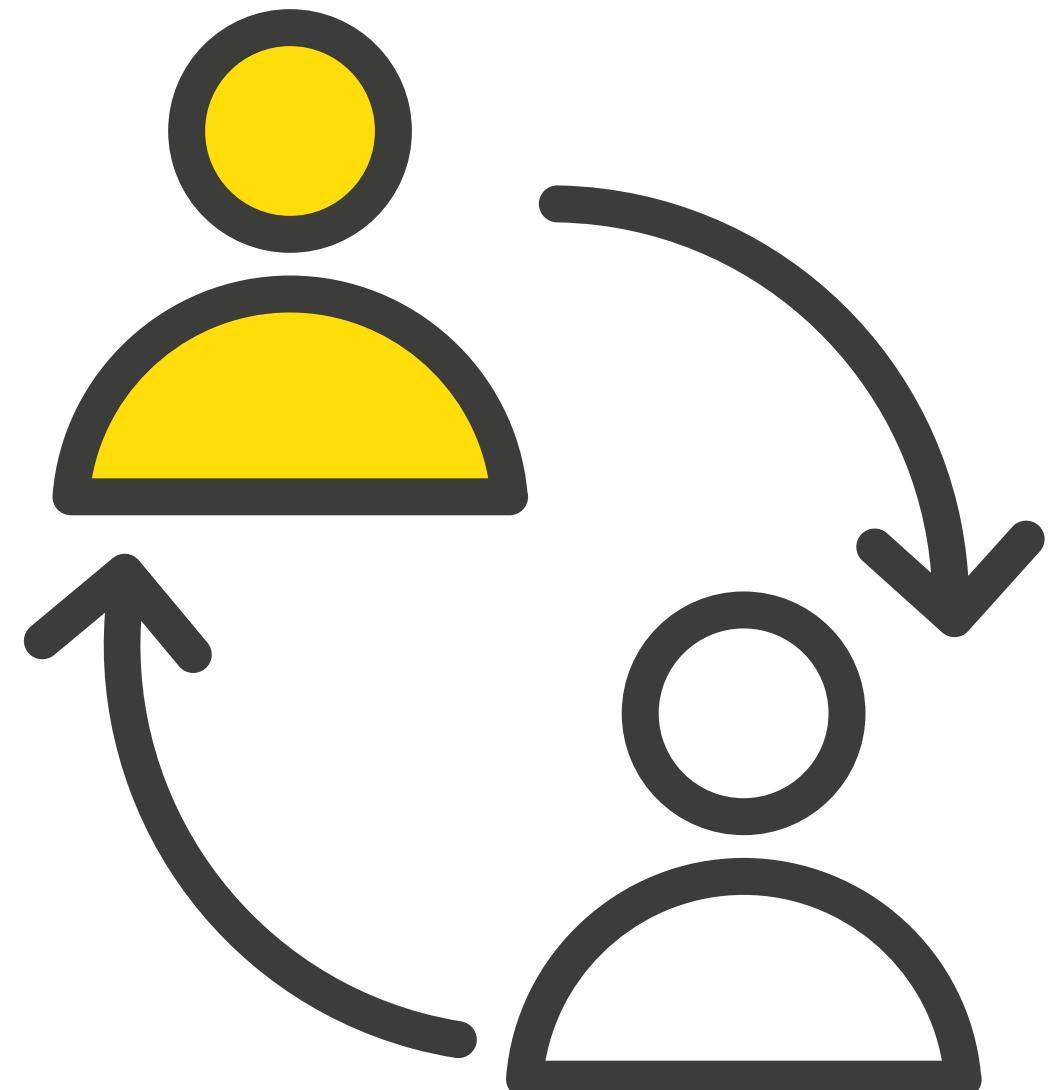
Relationships are nouns. But they're not tangible things like cats or shoes. They're the kind of nouns you can't pick up.

And here's a secret - most nouns you can't pick up are actually verbs masquerading as nouns. A relationship (n.) is really about the way people relate (v.) to each other.

By making a conscious effort to relate to people from all different areas of the project the PMO can become a trustworthy ally.

This is helpful when everything is going well, but it's absolutely vital when things start to go wrong.

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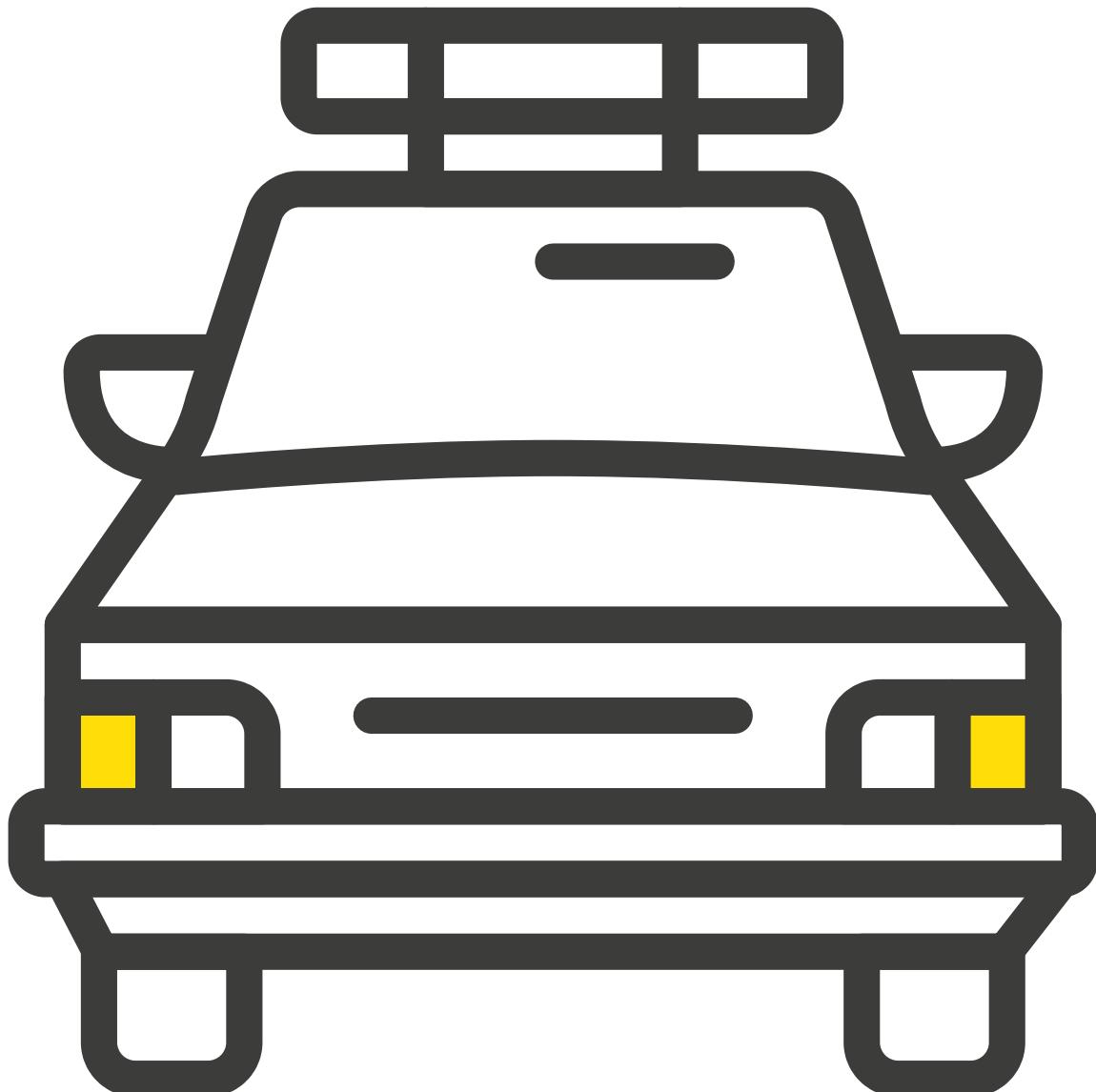
## Good Cop/Bad Cop

When the PMO does inevitably have to step up the project governance and play bad cop it's important to have those strong relationships in place so that people respect the hard decisions the PMO has to enforce.

Similarly, the PMO needs to earn the trust and respect of senior managers and key stakeholders when it comes to justifying a delay in the project or staking a case for an increase in budget. Relating upwards to Execs and senior people is crucial.

Flexibility in the way that the PMO relates to others needs constant work. From bad cop to guardian angel. From harsh whip-cracker to encouraging team-mate. From strategic thinker to detail planner. These all require different ways to relate to different people.

By focusing on how to relate to all stakeholders from the get-go, the PMO will build the relationships needed to make a success of your SAP programme.



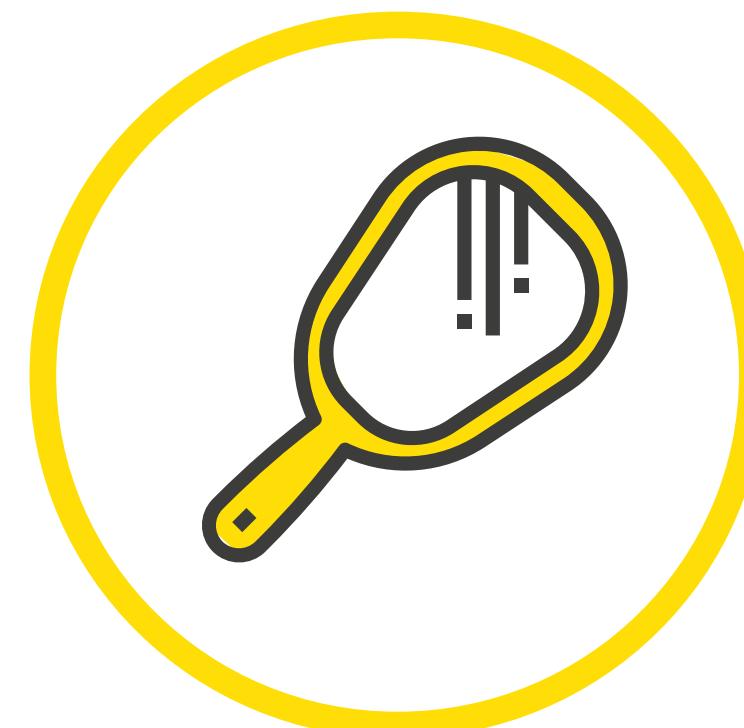
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### 3 Reasons why the PMO shouldn't just work for the PM

If the PMO works directly under the PM it's less effective as it can't hold the PM to account.

When the PMO works for the Execs it can hold a mirror up to not only the Project Team, but also the PM

The PMO has a faster route to escalations without having to go through the PM.





## Putting it into practice

Top tips for PMO prowess from a Resulting PMO Lead

"When you're working in the PMO, face to face communication is key to forming better working relationships with not only project members but other departments too.

Make time for people instead of just sitting behind a keyboard and firing out emails - a friendly face speaks volumes so making that extra effort to physically speak to people will increase trust in the PMO.

But it's not just about being everyone's best mate.

Delivering bad news is never easy - and when problems need to be highlighted to management it can sometimes result in heads on the chopping block which can be a hard thing to do.

As the PMO it's your responsibility to flag well in advance when the data shows things are going wrong - but it's just as important to offer a helping hand to the person who is struggling to deliver."



"If you do have to send a report to management that shows a certain person or team is under performing it's always a good idea to give people a heads up in advance.

This gives them chance to improve the statistics, decrease the chance of failure and - in some cases - gives them the kick up the arse they need.

Ultimately if the data is bad it's either a Project Management issue so it isn't the individual's fault, or they're simple not pulling their weight and it's only fair to everyone else that something gets done about it.

If you're fair, open and honest about the whole process it will only result in the PMO motivating the team and gaining their trust and respect.

After all, the PMO are there along with everyone else to get the project done. That's better achieved with a helping hand than by pointing the finger."

**Avtar Davatwal**  
SAP PMO Consultant - Resulting IT



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The main thing is to keep the  
main thing the main thing

”

Stephen R. Covey - The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People



## 4. Cheerleading the business case

Press the pause button on an SAP project in the middle of integration testing and shout  
"What's the business case?"

Silence.

Everyone is so lost in their tasks that they've lost the context. They've defocused on  
what you're really trying to achieve and gone tunnel vision on today's to-do.

Staying focused on the business case is THE most important thing.

Although you can work on an SAP project without really understanding the business case, our research shows that those SAP projects who embedded the business case in project communications were 17% more likely to be successful in delivering on the business case.

While the ones that didn't - well they were 20% less likely to deliver their business case.

Obvious, right?



## Be business case obsessive

By communicating the business case effectively, the PMO help increase your SAP project's chance of success.

SAP success doesn't just mean go-live being on time - it means delivering what the business actually needs. That's where the PMO comes in again.

While everyone else gets bogged down in the minutia of their key deliverables, the PMO - with its wide project overview - should have the latitude to be business case obsessive.

While this sounds simple enough on paper, if your PMO is delivered by an SI or a team of contractors things aren't all that straightforward.

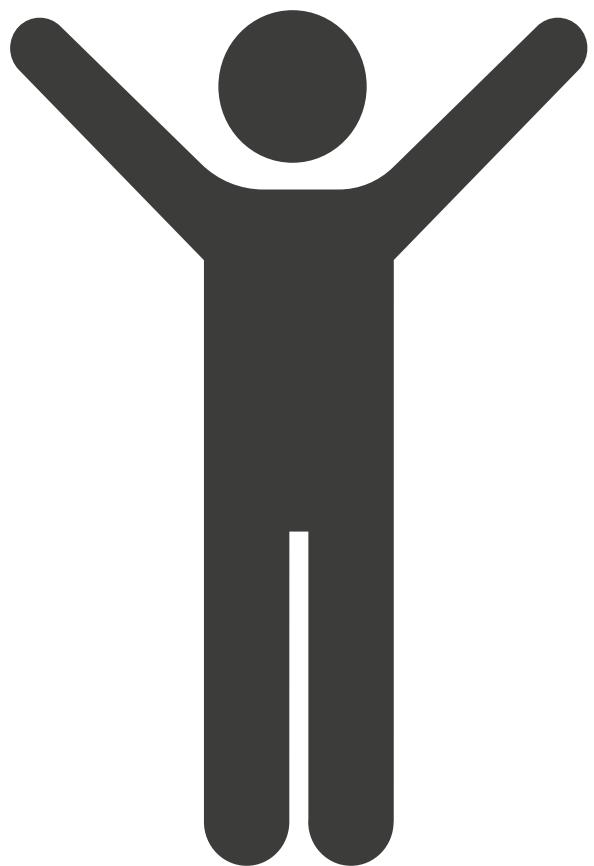
While senior management will defend the business case and expect it to be delivered, they're often too far removed from the nitty-gritty of a project to make it happen.

It's the PMO with their boots-on-the-ground position who are best placed to make sure the business case is at the forefront of everyone's mind day-to-day as issues, risks and decisions fly by.

Without the PMO keeping things clear, it can be easy for a project to lose track of its business case and become obsessed with getting to go-live. And go-live doesn't mean SAP success.

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**But what's the  
business case?!?!**



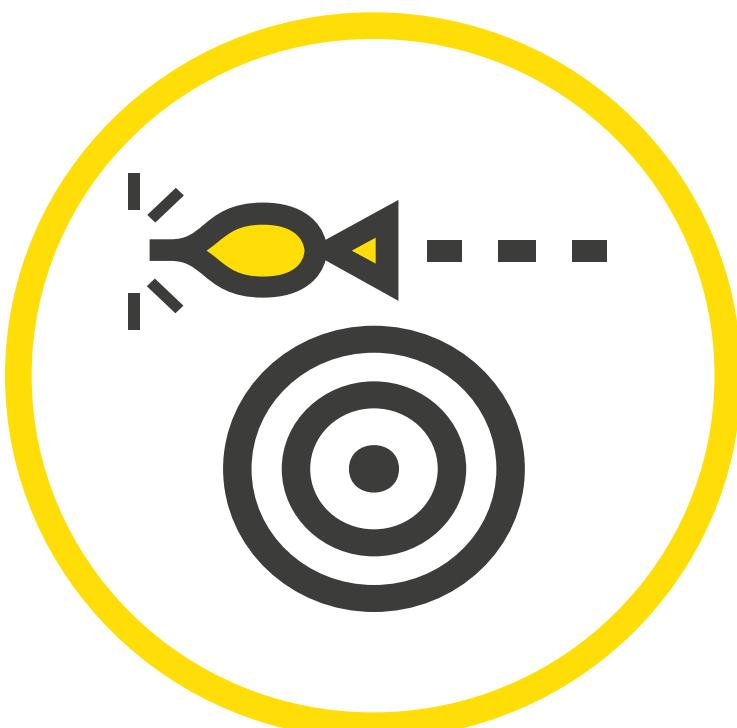
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### 3 signs your project has lost track of the business case

You end up delivering a system that doesn't meet the business requirements

You have a solution that delivers fewer benefits than were outlined as the reason for investment

The users don't adopt the solution which means you haven't been successful as a programme team





## Putting it into practice

Top tips for PMO prowess from a Resulting PMO Lead

"As the PMO it really is vital that you align what you're doing to the business case, and to make sure throughout the lifetime of the project that others are doing the same. In the many meetings that go on over a project's lifetime it's inevitable people will start to make suggestions that deviate from the plan and scope will start to creep.

This in itself isn't a bad thing, but as the PMO it is your job to ask why the suggested change has been made.

Is it to better align the project to the business case, or is it simply to make something easier for the Project Team in a way that could cause the project to fail on the business case?

If it is the latter, it is your job to reinforce the importance of the business case and get everyone back singing from the same hymn sheet, even if it means a bit of harder work."

**Helen Collinson**  
SAP PMO Consultant - Resulting IT



“

Trust is the glue of life. It's the  
most essential ingredient in  
effective communication.

”

Stephen R. Covey - The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People



## 5. Being autonomous and supportive

If there's one thing that a PMO needs to be effective on an SAP project it's autonomy.

To get this, Senior Executives must show their backing of the PMO and the project.

It's vital that the PMO is seen as the peer of business managers and not assistants.

This allows the PMO to be more active and helps to reduce pushback against PMO led initiatives.

But it's a two way street - to get real authority the PMO has to prove that what they're doing is worthwhile and adds value.

This means getting the right balance of mandatory checks, balances and documentation without bringing in so much bureaucracy that people feel like it's control for control's sake.

Some quick wins are a good way to get people onside early, and from there it's about getting the right mix of support when it's needed and taking the lead when the time is right.





## Putting it into practice

Top tips for PMO prowess from a Resulting PMO Lead

"A pivotal move that an Exec can make to highlight the backing of their PMO is giving absolute control to the PMO in a meeting i.e. letting the PMO lead the way and push the agenda through.

This shows the Exec's trust and reliance in the PMO which in turn will affect the way the Project Team perceives the PMO.

The PMO are there to drive a project through all stages to a successful go-live. Without a clear level of trust from Execs, this can trickle down to a granular level within the Project Team.

For example, without the clear backing of Execs menial tasks such as replying to PMO emails and attending 1-2-1 meetings can be severely affected with people treating them as a nuisance they can try and avoid. You want to instill a culture where people reply to a PMO's email like they would their boss's.

But of course it works both ways - for the Execs to publicly endorse the PMO the PMO must win the Execs trust. If the Executive endorsement is faked people will see through it quickly and the PMO will lose their respect."

**Leanne O'Wellen**  
SAP PMO Consultant - Resulting IT



“

Synergy is better than my way  
or your way. It's our way.

”

Stephen R. Covey - The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People



## 6. Thinking ahead for others

No one can be expected to see into the future - except of course if you work as part of the PMO.

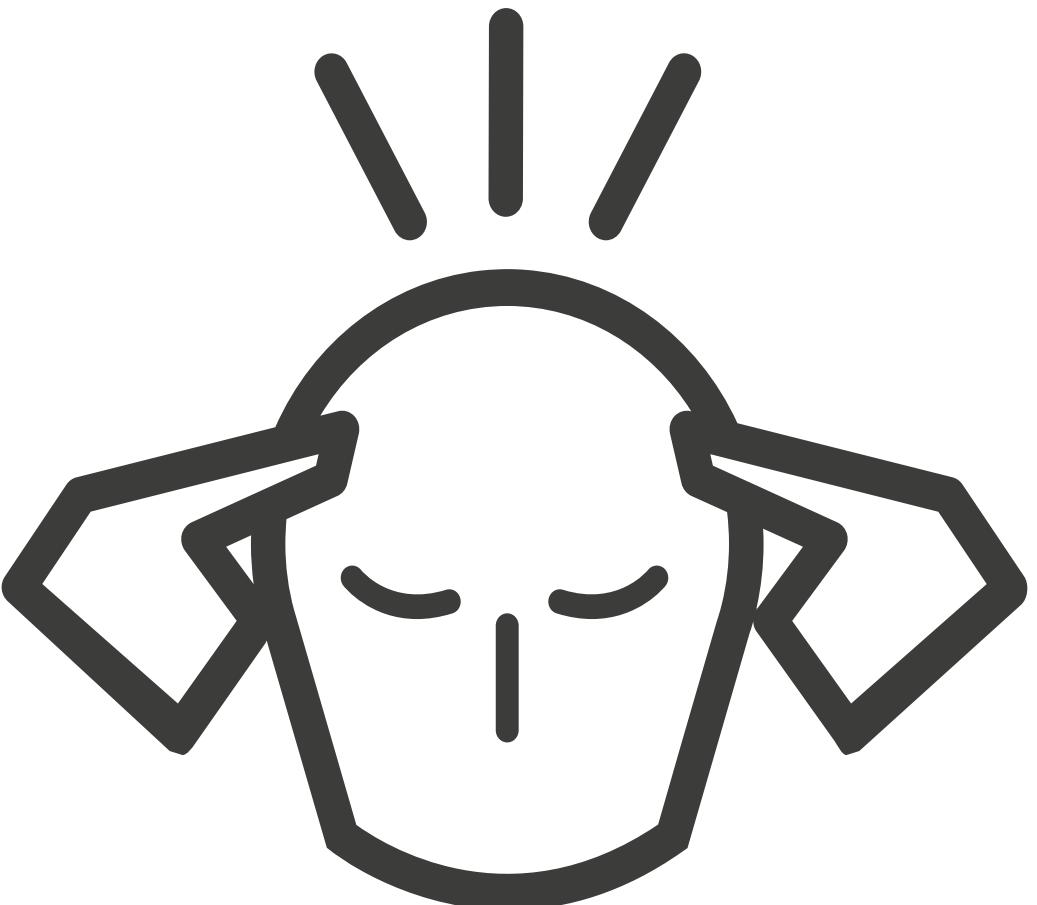
While everyone else has their head down trying to get their little bit of the project done, it's the PMO's job to look round, see where things are going, and see what's coming next.

While it's not quite Doctor Manhattan levels of precognition, simply mastering this skill can make the PMO the superhero of any project.

By identifying problems, assigning them ownership and escalating them to the right people, the PMO can help to stop problems before they happen.

But sometimes even PMO premonitions aren't enough - they have to step in and solve problems for themselves.

But how do you do it?



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## Master the mini-project

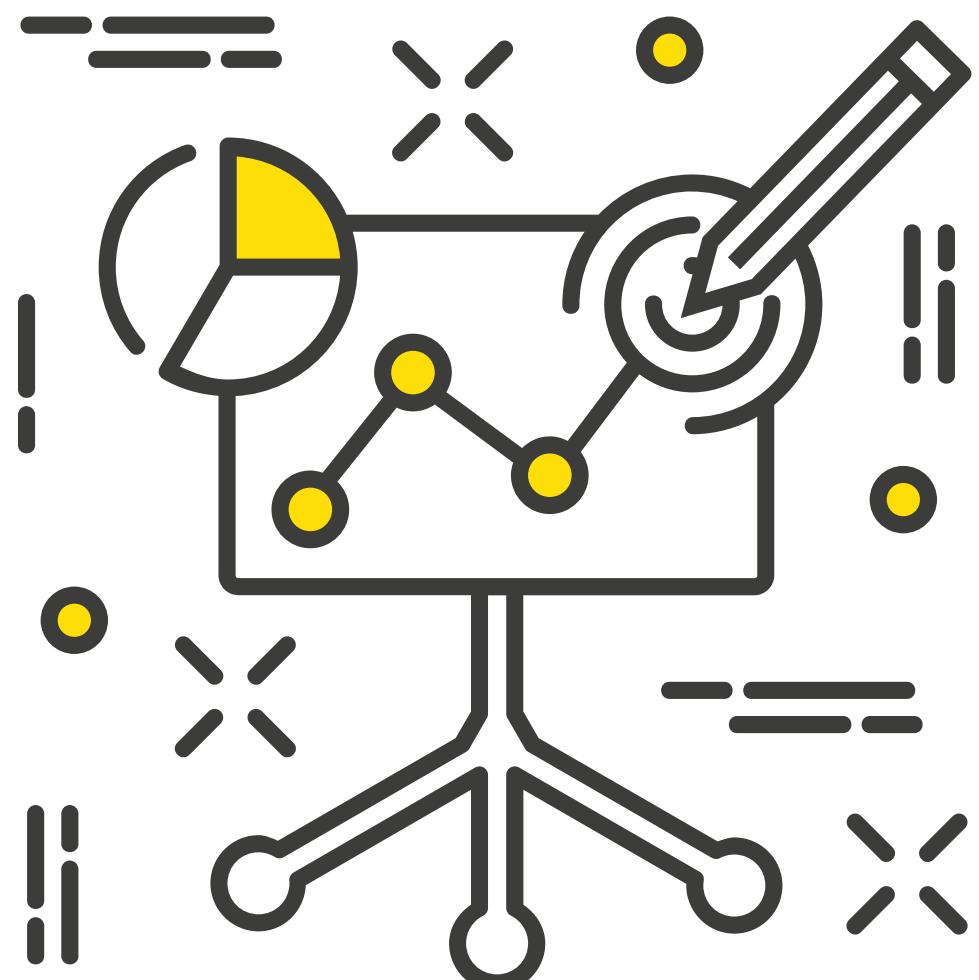
One of the best ways to solve big or enduring problems is to turn them into mini-projects in their own right.

Bring together everyone affected by the problem and come-up with a potential solution. Assign what needs to be done and track it like any other project.

Often when problems won't go away it's simply because no one wants to take ownership. The PMO can assign that ownership and make the problem go away.

And if a problem really is too big to fix - or if people simply won't step up and do their bit - the PMO can always report it up the chain to the Project Manager and beyond if necessary.

By focusing on spotting problems before they arrive and finding solutions to the big problems that just won't go away the PMO can help to keep the project on time and on budget.





## Putting it into practice

Top tips for PMO prowess from a Resulting PMO Lead

"Often the big problems that just won't go away are issues within the business that were not foreseen when planning began.

An example could be someone overlooking the financial aspects of non-UK sites when it comes to tax coding. If you had sites in the UK and US they would have separate tax rates meaning that one form of coding wouldn't suffice.

This is exactly the kind of thing that no one wants to take ownership of - it's a pain to sort out and it's too easy to push off on someone else. That makes it a prime example of when the PMO should step in with a "mini project".

It can be hard to find willing volunteers to join the team on these mini-projects so sometimes it is best to deal with Execs when facing such an issue.

With their buy in you will either get the authority to recruit people for the project internally, or you can get the budget to bring in specialists."

**Avtar Davatwal**  
SAP PMO Consultant - Resulting IT



“ The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities ”

Stephen R. Covey - The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People

## 7. Working with accountability

"Accountability breeds responsibility."

The PMO can serve many roles on a project; assistant, leader, policeman.

But who polices the police? That is to say - who holds the PMO accountable? Well, a good PMO will hold themselves accountable.

By keeping proper documentation and creating weekly dashboards to chart progression, the PMO can provide senior Executives with the information they need to challenge the PMO on time, schedule and budget.

If the PMO is performing well these things should be accurate. If there's a RAID log consider these questions:

- Is everything that's green actually on schedule?
- If everything's red is it actually that bad?

If the reporting isn't right, then it is the PMO that is letting the project down. And, if time and again the project is getting into a mess, chances are the PMO is under-performing.

Ultimately it is the Executive Team's job to control the PMO, but a good PMO will provide all the information the Execs need to do it. It's vital that as well as being experienced the PMO is a trusted source of information, otherwise it's impossible to tell if the project as a whole is on track.

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## Putting it into practice

Top tips for PMO prowess from a Resulting PMO Lead

"A large Global Implementation often leads to multiple PMO teams fronting each release and subsequent waves of an SAP programme.

As the project matures and adapts so should the PMO, however, sometimes this doesn't happen and the PMO do not perform in the way that they should.

An example would be 'traceability' e.g. managing deliverables. Without a secure space to store completed and approved deliverables there is no sense of control with document management.

Previously on a project that I had worked on, the PMO were not following the simple procedure of strict document management and this resulted in a number of things:

1. The team were unable to find or validate which documents were the approved versions thus holding back vital work
2. The PMO lost credibility with the Execs and the Project Team

As we've already covered Executive buy in is vital to PMO success, so this was really damaging to the PMO's overall effectiveness.

With projects as big as an SAP Programme even the most simple of tasks must be executed with perfection by the PMO."

**Helen Collinson**  
SAP PMO Consultant - Resulting IT



# It's time to sharpen the saw of your SAP project.

Steven Covey's 7th Habit of highly successful people was "Sharpening the Saw" - taking steps to ensure your continuous improvement.

At Resulting, we can provide SAP PMO services that will sharpen the saw of your next SAP project.

Independent of your business and your SI, our PMO team will be able to provide the truly impartial project governance you need to deliver your business case for SAP.

Contact us today to find out more.

[www.resulting-it.com/PMO-for-SAP](http://www.resulting-it.com/PMO-for-SAP)