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10 PM Trends for 2010

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Organizations will rely more on project management as "need to perform trumps survival in 2010," according to panel of senior executives and consultants.

As organizations switch their focus from surviving to demonstrating business value, metrics will play an increasingly important role in keeping management informed about project performance and its impact on the bottom line and customer service. That's one of the key takeaways from a list of global project management trends identified by a panel of consultants and senior executives that training provider ESI International gathered in November.

"While 2008 and 2009 wasn't easy, it gave project management professionals a rare opportunity to demonstrate their value, and the value of a systematic project management approach, under extreme pressure," said J. LeRoy Ward, PMP, PgMP, executive vice president of ESI, Arlington, Virginia. "This is why wise senior managers continue to invest in increasing their organization's PM skills and capacity. They want to ensure success of projects essential to producing great products, improving customer satisfaction and driving revenue and profit growth."

Here are ESI's Top 10 Project Management Trends for 2010:

1. Implementation of New PPM Solutions Will Soar

Program and project managers, under pressure from senior management to demonstrate project portfolio performance and its impact on the enterprise, will make the pitch for — and win — resources to implement project portfolio management solutions. This will provide the fact-based decision-making senior management needs.

2. Reliance on Requirements Metrics to Measure Performance Will Increase

In 2009 our experts predicted a greater role for requirements management and development, also known as business analysis. Reliance on RMD to determine metrics to track project performance will increase in 2010, helping to quantify organizational performance improvement for management.

3. Senior Executives Will Embrace the Value of Project and Program Governance

To facilitate improved organizational performance, project and program governance will be embraced from executive management to the project managers. This will help performance by ensuring the portfolio, programs and projects align with organizational resources and goals across the enterprise.

4. PMOs Will Go to the Next Level with BA Centers of Excellence

During the previous decade we saw the number of PMOs and their positive business impact increase significantly. PMOs will use this position of strength as a jumping off point to establish business analysis centers of excellence either within the PMO or alongside it to further improve project outcomes.

5. Demand for Agile Project Metrics Will Increase

With the increased use of Agile project management approaches, including the various implementations of Agile methods (e.g., Scrum), senior management will demand quality metrics that clearly demonstrate the value of Agile over other project management approaches for specific projects as well as Agile's impact on the achievement of organizational objectives.

6. Vendor Management and Program Outsourcing Will Move Front and Center

The trend of outsourcing will leap forward in 2010 as organizations continue to look to do more without permanent increases in staffing and other resources. Thought leading organizations will use project management principles to guide their contracting and outsourcing processes, leveraging project managers' skills and knowledge in schedule, risk, requirements and quality management to remove gray areas and hold the contractor's "feet to the fire."

7. Risk Management Will Become a PM Obsession

The greater emphasis on financial risk management will trickle through to other parts of the enterprise where risk assessment principles can be used to drive performance. This will lead to an increased focus on PM risk assessment with an emphasis at the program as well as the portfolio level. Organizations will seek a clear delineation between systemic and non-systemic risks; the determination and management of risk factors that could jeopardize success; and dependencies between program and portfolio components.

8. Crisis Environments Will Leverage Project Portfolio Principles for Better Outcomes

War zones, global pandemics and natural disasters will continue to present new challenges for non-governmental organizations and governments worldwide as they seek to do more with limited resources. Project portfolio management principles will help ensure that the right projects are selected and achieve the desired outcome. PPM will serve double duty in helping to effectively measure and communicate progress to donors and taxpayers.

9. PM Learning Measurement Will No Longer be a "Nice to Have"

In 2009, many organizations implemented first-time learning initiatives focused on project management maturity as a way to jump ahead of the competition. These forward looking organizations required programs be based on insightful pre-assessments that drove the design of learning programs, along with ways to assess progress and demonstrate performance improvement. 2010 will see an unprecedented increase in organizations using assessments to pinpoint their project management learning needs, track progress and identify the ROI senior management is looking for in this critical investment.

10. PM Learning Will Push out of the Classroom

To improve project management learning retention rates, and keep employees on-the-job as they learn, organizations will seek to leverage recent technological advances that help adults learn outside of the traditional classroom. This will be achieved via a range of learning modalities such as "burst" learning that focuses on a particular skill area for two to four hours, on-demand reference tools, electronic performance systems, job-aids and increases in formal coaching.

ESI offers more than 100 project management-related courses in 22 languages at more than 85 locations worldwide, and eight certificate programs through its educational partner, The George Washington University. For more information: www.esi-intl.com.

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