



Why a PMO Is Far More Than Project Delivery — And Why Many Project Managers Get This Wrong

Too many organisations still treat the PMO as an administrative bolt-on or a project-tracking function. And too many project managers fall into the trap of believing that being good at delivery automatically qualifies them to run a PMO. It does not. A PMO is not just a reporting line. It is a strategic **service** that enables delivery, protects commercial performance, and drives organisational maturity — and like any service, it must be measured, governed, improved, and held accountable.

A PMO should operate with the same rigour as any customer-facing service: **KPIs, performance reviews, service levels,** and a **continuous service improvement mindset**. Without these, it becomes a reporting factory rather than a strategic enabler.

The Trap: “I’m a Good PM, So I Can Run a PMO”

This is one of the most common misconceptions in our industry. Project managers excel at delivering their project. A PMO manager must deliver **everyone’s** ability to deliver — consistently, predictably, and in alignment with organisational strategy.

A PMO leader must think beyond the boundaries of a single project. They must understand the ecosystem: the commercial pressures, the operational impacts, the customer experience, the maturity of the organisation, and the long-term roadmap.

Being a strong PM is not enough. Running a PMO requires a hybrid mindset — part **project manager**, part **service delivery manager**, part **business partner**.





What Makes a Great PMO Manager? The Hybrid Role

A high-performing PMO manager blends two worlds:

1. Core Project Management Fundamentals

- **Governance** — ensuring consistency, control, and decision clarity
- **Financial management** — cost control, forecasting, profitability
- **Risk management** — early visibility, structured mitigation
- **Dependency management** — understanding the ripple effects across the portfolio

2. Operational & Service Delivery Capabilities

PORTFOLIO & DEPENDENCY MANAGEMENT

This is where many PMs struggle — because these skills sit outside traditional project delivery:

- **Change management** — ensuring impacts are understood and adopted
- **Portfolio dependency management** — not just project-to-project, but project-to-business
- **Resource management** — capacity, capability, utilisation
- **Commercial management** — margins, contracts, renewals, profitability
- **Customer satisfaction** — because a PMO is a service, not a spreadsheet
- **Team management** — coaching, capability uplift, culture
- **BAU impact analysis** — understanding how change affects operations, stability, and growth
- **Service levels & KPIs** — measuring performance like a service organisation
- **Strategic alignment** — ensuring delivery supports the roadmap, not just the plan

This is the difference between a PMO that reports on delivery and a PMO that **enables** delivery.



Final Thought

The Real Purpose of a PMO

A PMO is a strategic service that:

- Drives predictable, repeatable delivery
- Protects commercial performance
- Improves customer confidence
- Enables organisational maturity
- Supports growth and profitability
- Ensures change lands safely into BAU
- Provides leadership, not just reporting

A PMO is not a back-office function. It is a **value-generating service** that should be measured, reviewed, and continuously improved like any other service offering.

A great PMO manager is not just a great project manager. They are a hybrid leader who understands delivery, service, operations, commercial realities, and customer experience. They do not just run a PMO — they run a service that underpins the organisation's ability to deliver its strategy.

HYBRID PMO MANAGER

