What to Consider When Selecting PPM Tools
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Initiatives: PMO Evolution for Digital

Given the increasing pressure for faster and more-flexible delivery, and the need to capture work efforts in real time, project and portfolio management software should no longer be considered optional. This article will help you understand the end-to-end benefits of a PPM tool.

In the absence of a solid program and portfolio management (PPM) tool, individuals and small teams tasked with managing projects often use multiple, disparate tools, such as spreadsheets or project collaboration software, to communicate and manage projects. This often leads to intolerable levels of inefficiency. The PMO and enterprise PMO (EPMO) can expend efforts equivalent to that of as many as two full-time employees (FTEs) over three business weeks to obtain information from all these disparate tools. That information is often out-of-date by the time it’s presented to business and IT executives for decision making. PPM software should no longer be considered optional, given the increasing pressure for faster and flexible delivery and the need to capture all work efforts in real time. However, those in control of budgets may not understand the real benefits of a PPM tool.

A business case for a PPM tool is challenging, because it’s difficult to say that the organization will save money by investing in a tool. Instead, validate the business case with the following areas:

- **Visibility** of project data, such as resource availability and project performance
- **Data integrity** — one true source of project truth
- **Decision making** — the ability to manage an entire program of work in one place and make decisions with visibility of impact. Gartner research Secure Funding for PPM Tools With a Persuasive Business Case describes the benefits of a PPM tool you should stress when making your business case.

Once funding for PPM software has been approved, PPM leaders often struggle to identify the PPM technology most suited for their organization. The estimated $3.1 billion PPM market represents a variety of existing and emergent PPM submarkets. With so much to choose from, PPM leaders can easily be entrapped by settling on a PPM solution based on the “shiny object syndrome,” in search of the newest and most elaborate offering. PPM leaders can best navigate this complex environment to select the best tool to support delivery of value for the organization by applying an internally focused, multidimensional framework to:
As organizations progress with their digital initiatives, PPM leaders must consider the viability of a broader ecosystem of tools to satisfy the needs of:

- **Strategy realization offices (SROs) and EPMOs**: These require strategic planning and portfolio-level decision support for governing and course correction at the portfolio level.

- **PMOs, project teams and agile teams**: These require support for traditional project management with accelerated emphasis on more agile and continuous delivery. They focus on the detailed execution and delivery of products, deliverables, capabilities and outcomes.

PPM leaders must respond to both types of technology needs by evolving their PPM technology footprint to support both strategy and execution. This requires some allowance for a reasonable proliferation of different types of PPM technologies and configurations to support both strategy and execution needs (see Market Guide for Adaptive Project Management and Reporting).

PPM leaders must also apply sound organization change management practices to address potential adoption challenges. It can go unnoticed if an organization fails to use PPM tools after it has implemented them. Although the underuse of these tools may not be immediately noticeable, lack of adoption damages an organization’s ability to present and assess insights to drive the success of its investments. The most significant period for change adoption is after project execution, not during the project itself. Change methodology must include preproject and postproject activities to ensure improved adoption.

*This is a guest article written by Mbula Schoen a Director Analyst in the Program and Portfolio Management (PPM) team.*
Recommended by the Authors

The PPM Market Now Supports Strategic Portfolio Management and Adaptive Project Management
The PPM market is evolving to support the expanding technology needs of enterprises engaged in digital business. As a result, PPM leaders who establish SPM and continuous delivery capabilities are increasingly investing in SPM and adaptive PM and reporting technologies.

Market Guide for Adaptive Project Management and Reporting
The PPM market supports strategic portfolio management and adaptive project management and reporting. Program and portfolio management leaders should use this Market Guide when choosing tools specifically for adaptive project and work management and reporting.

Portfolio Dashboard on a Page
This single-page resource provides PMOs a sample of clean formatting and actionable metrics that allow senior portfolio decision makers to easily process key information and act decisively.

Mitigate COVID-19’s Impact in PPM With These Action Items
Read this to learn the five action steps PPM leaders can take to mitigate COVID-19’s impact, including implementing best practices for remote work, preparing for increasing cost pressures and building effective two-way communication channels.

Focus on Internal Needs for PPM Tool Selection Success
This research demonstrates how PPM leaders selecting tools must apply an internally focused, multidimensional framework to ensure that the tool functionality complements the organization’s maturation and supports the mix of work delivery frameworks.

Toolkit: RFP Template to Select Adaptive Project Management Software
Choosing the right adaptive project management and reporting software helps ensure efficient project, program and portfolio delivery; better decisions; and improved success. This Toolkit helps PPM leaders define the capabilities needed and provides an RFP template.

Beware of One-Size-Fits-All PPM Software Systems
Project portfolio management technology investments require flexibility and different tools and capabilities to match distinctive portfolio and execution needs. This research provides key guidelines to help PPM leaders build a flexible PPM technology footprint to support a scaling digital business.

Avoid These Major Pitfalls When Implementing a PPM Solution to Support Continuous Delivery
Effective support of continuous delivery requires a broad perspective to implementing PPM tools. Program and portfolio management leaders must avoid major implementation pitfalls that can contribute to deployment failure if they are to support their organizations’ digital transformation.
Position your organization for success. Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for the PPM role:

**Research**
Shift PMO Priorities to Support a Digital Enterprise
Learn how PMOs can build strategy-related PPM capabilities.

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**Webinar**
Leverage Strategic Portfolio Management to Enable Business Agility
Discover how CIOs and IT leaders can use three key SPM attributes to scale and harvest digital business investments.

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**Article**
3 Steps to Start Lean Portfolio Management
Organizations are increasingly looking to agile frameworks to manage costs while delivering value and agility effectively. Learn the three steps to get started.

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