SERVICE & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

4 WAYS THAT PUBLIC SECTOR IT ORGANIZATIONS CAN BENEFIT FROM INTEGRATED WORK MANAGEMENT

TeamDynamix

We all manage projects everyday. The headline projects are the ones that we tend to hear about – often led by IT and managed through a project management office (PMO). They use formal approaches like Agile or Waterfall and are built with a complex infrastructure. However, those represent only a portion of the projects that an organization under - takes. For most projects however, the same resources are also allocated to tickets and incidents. So how can we best leverage tax payer dollars to most effectively implement and support innovative and mission critical technology?

PROJECT INTAKE

START FROM THE RIGHT PLACE – INTAKE AND GOVERNANCE

The first building block we must consider is not actually related to delivering projects, but rather selecting them. In virtually every organization, there is more work proposed than can be delivered with the time and resources available. As a result, there needs to be an effective way of reviewing proposals and selecting the ones that make the most sense for the business.

Consider IT as a simple example. IT receives help desk tickets on a regular basis and a number of those tickets reveal problems in systems that need projects to fix – several people working together over the span of several weeks.

There simply aren't enough people for that to happen every time, and not every problem has the same level of impact or importance. The organization must therefore have a process in place to review proposals and determine which ones will be approved, which will be scheduled for later, and which problems we must live with. That's where intake comes in. In IT there may be a formal process that requires forms to be completed and be reviewed by a group of managers.
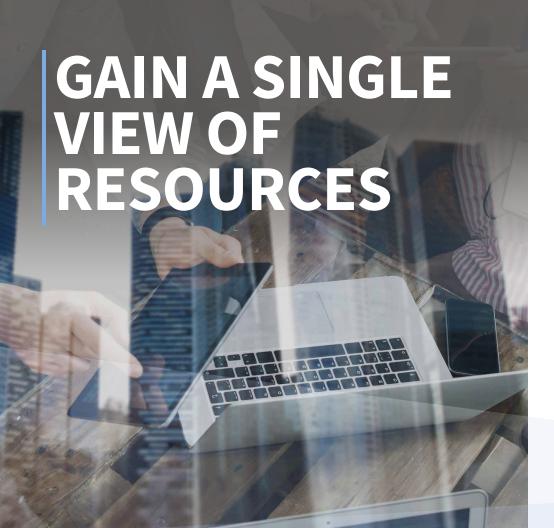
TIME TRACKING

No organization, indeed no department, can focus only on one or two things at a time. They have their regular workloads to manage, they have several different projects on the go, and they are supporting project work from other business areas.

Keeping track of this work accurately is critical to prevent things from being missed – with significant business impacts happening as a result. That's why the ability to track and manage resources across a portfolio of projects is critical. From simple tracking of how much time is being spent on tickets or incidents or a project, to understanding whether we have enough people, and enough skills, to complete the planned work, resource management is fundamental to effective service and project delivery.

The base unit of resource management is time tracking: the ability to accurately, easily and consistently capture who is doing what and how long is being spent on each task. A quarter century ago this process was about making sure people were working as hard as they should be; today things are very different.

Time tracking today is about understanding the accuracy of work estimates, identifying areas where more people are needed, establishing when people will be available to work on something else, etc. This information forms the foundation of how organizations understand the work they have underway and the work they have capacity to deliver in the future.

Time tracking must be a fundamental part of how work gets done – another reason why investing in the right software is critical. Information will only be complete and accurate if the submission of that information is integral to how work gets done.

GAIN A SINGLE VIEW OF RESOURCES

In a recent TDX market study, 78% of IT organizations identified as their top challenge as resource constraints.

When you evaluate an IT Service Management platform, there are a few key areas that will help you gain efficiencies. These are designed to help you free up resources:

1. Self-service: does it offer a self-service portal that your end users can leverage? Can they easily look up answers and submit tickets through one highly indexed knowledge base?

2. Do you allow for Knowledge Centered Service? Can your end-users comment on the articles & submit additions?

3. Are you engaged in proper change management? Poor planning for changes can account for up to 80% of your tickets!

4. Are you using a single platform? When you bring tickets, incidents, problems and projects to one platform you can better manage resources and become more efficient.

5. Are you able to engage in resource capacity planning? With resource capacity planning, you're able to get a big-picture view across your entire IT organization, which in turn enables to you balance workloads.

REPORTING

The final building block builds upon the concepts we've outlined in the previous four: the ability to generate meaningful information from what is happening within the IT service and project teams.

Reporting is critical to the success of the IT department – it is the way we understand what is happening, and more importantly what must be done about it. Effective reporting provides decision support, helping leaders to interpret past events and make adjustments that will help ensure the project is still capable of delivering successful business outcomes.

To achieve that, reporting must be able to convert the raw data captured on projects and present it as information that is meaningful for each person viewing it. This is more complex than it may seem: information must be presented in such a way that the finance team can analyze the cost information, the department head can see everything impacting his or her area, resource owners can see all the projects their staff are working on, etc. And of course, all that information must come together in a way that provides a complete picture of what is happening, on individual projects and for the entire organization. When you have all the data in one place, getting to a true picture of resource allocation and team outcomes can become a reality.

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