

# Designing a Project Management Office That Works:

## The Next Generation PMO

Satinder Baweja & Lori Vidak

Milestone Consultants, Plano, Texas

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### Abstract

Project Management Offices (PMOs) are widely adopted across large enterprises, yet more than half fail to deliver on their intended value. Organizations continue to launch PMOs, watch them underperform, dismantle them, and start the cycle over again. This paper argues that the persistent failure of the PMO is not a symptom of flawed execution alone, but of a foundational design problem: organizations implement PMOs without adequately clarifying what a PMO is, what purpose it serves, and what it needs to do. Drawing on current research and practitioner experience, this paper introduces the concept of the Next Generation PMO (NG PMO)—a directive, enterprise-level Project Management Organization built on deliberate design, thorough assessment, appropriate tools, and sustainable practices. The NG PMO is positioned not merely as an improvement on existing models, but as a reimagining of the PMO's role as a strategic command center for the enterprise. The paper outlines the foundational building blocks, development process, tools, implementation considerations, and sustainability mechanisms required to design a PMO that actually works.

**Keywords:** *PMO design, project management office, Next Generation PMO, enterprise PMO, program management, project portfolio management, PMO maturity, organizational alignment, PMO sustainability*

### Introduction

Houston, we have a problem. That famous phrase from the Apollo 13 mission has long served as shorthand for the kind of crisis that demands capable, prepared, and empowered ground control. For the Apollo 13 crew, mission control in Houston was not merely a support function—it was the

command center that stood between disaster and survival. It had the expertise, tools, authority, and mission clarity to guide a crippled spacecraft back to Earth.

The parallel to modern project management is uncomfortably apt. Like the Apollo 13 crew, project teams today frequently face serious, compounding problems in delivering complex work. Unlike that crew, however, many project teams operate without a capable command center to guide them. The Project Management Office exists to fill that role—yet too often, it does not.

Research consistently points to a troubling picture. According to data compiled from multiple industry sources, 90% of large enterprises have PMOs—and 50% of those PMOs are replaced within three years (PMsolutions Research, 2014; ESI International, 2011). Two-thirds of project completions fall short of promised time and budget targets. A striking 68% of stakeholders describe their PMOs as bureaucratic rather than effective. When non-PMO staff are asked to rate their PMO, 40% give it a below-average rating, and only 20% rate it above average. Meanwhile, 66% of PMOs do not reach their potential delivery value (Needs, 2019).

These numbers suggest not a crisis of effort, but of design. Organizations put PMOs in place without first answering three foundational questions: What is a PMO? What is it for? What should it actually do? The answers are more nuanced than they might appear, and the confusion around them is the root cause of most PMO failures.

This paper presents the Next Generation PMO framework—a concept developed by Milestone Consultants and introduced at the PMI® EMEA Congress 2019 in Dublin, Ireland. The NG PMO is not built from scratch; it draws on the best-functioning elements of existing PMO models. The old adage applies here: don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. There are proven building blocks worth keeping. But those blocks need to be assembled with purpose, assessed with rigor, and sustained with discipline. The pages that follow lay out how to do that.

## **The State of the PMO**

Before proposing a solution, it is worth pausing to fully understand the problem. The statistics cited above are not outliers; they represent a consistent pattern documented across multiple independent research efforts spanning more than a decade. The PMO failure rate, by any measure, exceeds 50%. That is not a marginal underperformance. That is a systemic failure.

What makes this pattern particularly frustrating is that it appears to be self-reinforcing. An organization recognizes the need for a better project management structure. It launches a PMO. The PMO struggles to demonstrate value. Leadership loses confidence. The PMO is shuttered or dramatically restructured. A new PMO is launched. The cycle repeats. This is not a theoretical concern. Data shows that half of large-enterprise PMOs are replaced within three years of their creation, indicating this cycle is playing out in real organizations regularly.

The stakeholder perception problem is particularly instructive. When 68% of stakeholders describe their PMO as bureaucratic and ineffective, they tell us something important: the PMO is failing to communicate and deliver value in terms that matter to the people it is meant to serve. This is not merely a marketing problem. It reflects a genuine misalignment between what the PMO is designed to do and what the organization needs from it.

The low ratings from non-PMO staff tell a similar story. If 40% of the people closest to the work consider their PMO below average, the PMO has either failed to clearly articulate its value proposition or failed to deliver on it. Either way, the result is the same: a loss of organizational trust that makes it nearly impossible for the PMO to perform at its potential.

The path out of this cycle begins with two focus areas: communications and visibility. As a proponent of your PMO, the challenge is to turn potential sponsors into supporters. If the leadership team does not understand the value the PMO brings, they will not invest in it. To win and sustain that support, the PMO's mission, plans, data reports, and strategies must speak clearly to executive decision-makers in terms that address their concerns—and their budget authority. Equally important is visibility: a commitment to transparency about major milestones and any changes affecting cost, quality, or schedule. These impacts become far easier to communicate when they are tracked and audited regularly.

## **Why Designing the PMO Has Been Hard**

The difficulty of designing an effective PMO is only partly a technical challenge—it is also, and more so, a conceptual one. Organizations consistently struggle to get clear, aligned answers to three foundational questions: What is a PMO? What is it for? What does it do?

The first question, “What is a PMO?” has more answers than most practitioners realize. Depending on the organization and the source, a PMO might be defined as a centralized system of project management processes and methodology, a project management office supporting individual project teams, or a program management office coordinating multiple related projects. Each definition implies a different structure, scope, and set of expectations. Without agreement on which definition applies, the PMO is built on an ambiguous foundation.

The second question, “What is a PMO for?” has several legitimate purposes, including creating common ground for methodologies, standardizing terminology, introducing effective and repeatable project management processes, providing common supporting tools, and improving the organization’s overall level of project success. Most PMOs address some of these, but few address all of them coherently.

The third question, “What does a PMO do?” encompasses a remarkably broad range of functions. A fully functioning PMO may be responsible for portfolio management, strategic planning, financial management, governance and performance management, risk management, issue management, scope management, schedule management, organizational change management, communications management, resource management, talent and training management, supplier management, quality management, and knowledge management. These functions integrate and roll up through individual projects, the program level, and the enterprise as a whole. The challenge is that most PMOs attempt to address only a subset of these functions—often without a clear rationale for which ones they prioritize.

This is the core of the design problem. When the answers to these three questions are vague or misaligned, the resulting PMO lacks the clarity of purpose needed to demonstrate value. It becomes, almost inevitably, what stakeholders describe: a bureaucratic process machine that consumes resources without delivering proportionate results.

This paper proposes a new concept—the Next Generation Project Management Organization—as the answer to these foundational questions.

## **The Established Building Blocks of Existing PMO Designs**

Designing something new does not require abandoning everything that has come before. Existing PMO models, even the ones that have struggled, contain viable, tested elements worth preserving. The challenge is identifying which elements are worth keeping and how to combine them into something more effective.

The literature and practice of project management have produced a reasonably clear taxonomy of PMO characteristics across four categories: influence, scope, approach, and quality.

## **Influence**

A PMO's influence describes the degree of authority it holds over project management practice. A supportive PMO offers ideas, templates, and best practices, but lacks the authority to enforce adoption. A controlling PMO provides support and enforces some standards, requiring adherence to certain processes. A directive PMO holds direct management authority over project delivery, with the power to enforce compliance or delegate enforcement to project managers. The level of influence a PMO exercises has a significant effect on its ability to deliver consistent, measurable results.

## **Scope**

Scope describes how broadly the PMO's oversight extends. An individual-scope PMO manages a single project. A departmental PMO coordinates multiple projects within a defined program or business unit. An enterprise PMO manages the full project portfolio across the organization—aligning project selection and prioritization with corporate strategy. While organizations may have multiple PMOs at different scope levels, the enterprise-level PMO provides the strategic oversight that lower-level offices cannot.

## **Approach**

A PMO's approach describes how it organizes its work across time horizons and functions. A strategic approach focuses on long-term priorities, corporate alignment, and the selection and sequencing of projects. A tactical approach manages resources, addresses short-term needs, and solves immediate problems. An operational approach handles day-to-day functions—the routine work of project support and administration. Most effective PMOs combine all three approaches, with the balance determined by the PMO's scope and maturity.

## Qualities

Beyond structure and function, effective PMOs exhibit certain organizational qualities that enable them to adapt and improve over time. Strategic alignment ensures the PMO's work consistently reflects and advances the parent organization's priorities. Agility enables the PMO to adapt quickly to changing business conditions, shifting priorities, and new information. Innovation refers to a cultural disposition that encourages continuous improvement—an environment where better ways of doing things are actively sought and implemented. Every PMO, regardless of scope or approach, should embody all three of these qualities.

## The Next Generation PMO

Given the persistent failure of PMOs operating under the current paradigm, it is fair to say that repeating the same design approach and expecting different results is not a reasonable strategy. Some would call it insanity. The Next Generation PMO is premised on a different set of assumptions about what a PMO needs to be from day one.

The NG PMO differs from conventional models in four key ways. First, it is mature in expert competencies from the outset—rather than starting with limited capabilities and growing into them over the years, it launches with Level 5 PMO maturity capabilities already in place. Second, it has core functions explicitly designed to drive value to the parent organization, not merely to support project delivery in isolation. Third, it directly manages the project portfolio at the enterprise level, integrating portfolio management into its central mission rather than treating it as a separate or optional function. Fourth, its growth trajectory is defined by the amount of strategic work it performs and the value it delivers—not by internal capability development alone.

The NG PMO development follows a disciplined five-stage process: establishing purpose, conducting assessments, selecting building blocks, deploying tools, and executing the implementation. Each stage builds on the last, and the sequence matters. A common mistake is to begin with tools or structure before purpose and assessment are complete. The NG PMO framework insists on getting the foundation right before building upward.

## Establishing Purpose

Every successful PMO begins with someone advocating for it—and that advocate almost certainly has a purpose in mind. The NG PMO framework takes that intuitive purpose and formalizes it

through a deliberate process of identifying why the PMO is needed and how it will add value. This list of reasons becomes the raw material for the PMO's mission statement. However, the purpose cannot be accurately defined without first making assessments. The mission statement that will be "sold" to executives should be finalized only after the assessment process is complete.

### **Assessment: Knowing Where You Are Before Planning Where to Go**

The NG PMO requires three types of assessment before the design process can proceed with confidence: an organizational assessment, a PMO assessment, and a project manager assessment.

**The organizational assessment** asks how ready, willing, and able the organization is to implement or improve its PMO structure. This means evaluating cultural readiness for change, leadership support, and the existing level of project management practice. A key reference point here is the five-level organizational project management maturity model.

1. Initial Process
2. Structured Process & Standards
3. Organizational Standards & Institutionalized Process
4. Managed Process
5. Optimizing Process

The NG PMO framework proposes that an organization should be at a minimum of Level 3 maturity, characterized by organizational standards and institutionalized processes, before attempting to stand up a full NG PMO. Organizations that have not yet adopted and institutionalized accepted PM standards across the enterprise are not yet prepared to fully leverage a PMO. Project management has been a mature profession for more than fifty years, with well-established standards and best practices available through PMI, APM, and other associations. There is no longer an excuse for organizational-level non-adoption.

**The PMO assessment** evaluates the current state of any existing PMO: its performance history, current capabilities, methods, and practices, and where improvement and expansion are needed. This provides a baseline against which future growth can be measured.

1. Monitors, controls, reports
2. Scope of level 1, plus analyzes data

3. Scope of level 1 & 2, plus works with PMs and senior management to implement solutions
4. Scope of levels 1-3, plus strategically qualifies, plans/aligns projects, establishes standard processes and tools for all projects
5. Scope of levels 1-4, plus provides training support and career direction for PMs & PM teams

**The project manager assessment** examines the talent pool available to staff and to the PMO lead. This is frequently overlooked, with costly results. A well-designed PMO staffed with the wrong project managers will still fail. The NG PMO uses a five-level PM maturity framework to classify and strategically assign project management talent.

1. Assistant PM
2. Project Manager
3. Senior Project Manager
4. Program Project Manager
5. Executive or Portfolio Project Manager

It also provides the basis for designing a training and succession plan to develop talent over time. Comparable frameworks exist through IPMA and other professional bodies, and the NG PMO does not require adherence to any single association. What matters is that the assessment is systematic and honest.

## **The Selected Building Blocks for the NG PMO**

Drawing on the PMO characteristics described earlier, the NG PMO selects a specific configuration of building blocks designed to maximize strategic value delivery from day one.

**In terms of influence**, the NG PMO is directive. It holds direct management authority over project delivery and can enforce standards and practices. This is a deliberate choice: supportive and controlling PMOs lack the authority to drive consistent change, and consistent change is what most struggling organizations need. At the same time, the NG PMO pairs its directive influence with strong support capabilities—it leads from a position of genuine expertise and assistance, not merely enforcement.

**In terms of scope**, the NG PMO operates at the enterprise level. Returning to the Apollo 13 analogy: though Houston ground control supported the mission of a specific crew, its value lay in

its enterprise-level capability—the ability to mobilize the full resources of NASA’s mission control infrastructure on behalf of any mission that needed it. The enterprise-level PMO serves the same function. It is the command center for project management across the organization. Existing departmental or individual-scope PMOs can be modified to operate under the enterprise PMO’s direction, and where no other PMOs exist, the enterprise PMO takes on portfolio-level prioritization and resource management directly.



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<https://www.nasa.gov/about/>

**In terms of approach**, the NG PMO is primarily strategic, with a secondary emphasis on tactical support and an operational capability housed within its Center of Excellence. And in terms of qualities, the NG PMO is designed for strategic alignment, agility, and innovation—not as aspirational values,

but as structural design requirements.

## The Tools to Build the NG PMO Model

Building blocks alone are not enough. The NG PMO requires a set of tools that cement those blocks together—tools that establish its intent, demonstrate its value, enable its alignment with the organization, provide a roadmap for growth, and verify readiness for launch. Five tools form the core of the NG PMO model: the mission statement, the PMO organizational structure, the KPI framework, the road map to maturity, and the implementation checklist.

### The Mission Statement: The Commander's Intent

The mission statement is the PMO’s commander’s intent—the single, clear articulation of why the PMO exists and what it is designed to accomplish. It should articulate an actionable goal, clearly demonstrate what the PMO does, illustrate how it adds value to the organization, realistically inspire the team, and be concise enough that every member of the PMO can articulate it without consulting a document.

Consider, by way of example, NASA’s mission statement.

Its mission advances the specific space and aerospace capabilities of the United States, but the technologies developed in pursuit of that mission have benefited every citizen—LED lighting, water purification, medical devices, and countless other innovations<sup>1</sup>. A mission statement of that quality promotes doing the right thing at the right time with the right people. It is aligned with the organization’s parent purpose and generates value far beyond its immediate scope.

A sample PMO mission statement might read: “Execute business strategy for maximum returns on investment by selecting the right projects, people and timing to deliver the best value. Provide transparency into project budgets, timelines, and ROI.” Notice that this statement directly addresses the value the PMO provides to the business, aligns with defined corporate objectives, and commits to a standard of transparency that sponsors and stakeholders can hold the PMO accountable to.

The mission statement is drafted early in the PMO’s development but finalized only after assessments are complete and input has been received from project managers and key stakeholders.

## PMO Organizational Structure

The NG PMO requires two distinct views of its organizational structure: external and internal. The external structure describes how all of the organization’s PMOs relate to one another and to the parent enterprise. The internal structure describes the PMO team itself—its roles, hierarchy, and decision-making authority.

The external structure of the NG PMO is best understood through the metaphor of a tree. The company is the soil—the environment from which the PMO draws its purpose, resources, and direction. The organizational goals, standards, and principles are the root system that anchors and feeds the entire structure. The enterprise PMO is the trunk—the central, load-bearing element that gives the entire structure its strength and direction. Departmental PMOs are the branches,

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<sup>1</sup> NASA. (2019). *Spinoff 2019*. NASA Technology Transfer Program. [https://spinoff.nasa.gov/Spinoff2019/pdf/Spinoff508\\_2019.pdf](https://spinoff.nasa.gov/Spinoff2019/pdf/Spinoff508_2019.pdf)

NASA. (n.d.). *About Spinoff*. <https://spinoff.nasa.gov/Spinoff>

extending outward from the trunk as resources and organizational needs allow. Individual projects are the leaves, growing from the branches and producing the immediate deliverables of the organization's work. Input from project managers and stakeholders functions like rain—nourishing the structure from outside. Progress information is the sunlight, transforming into the reports and data that feed decision-making throughout the organization. And the fruit of this healthy tree is the benefits and value the PMO delivers to the organization and its customers.

The internal structure of the NG PMO is intentionally lean—complex enough to be effective, simple enough to remain agile. At the top is the Chief Projects Officer (CPO), who manages the NG PMO at the enterprise level. Reporting to the CPO are directors for each relevant business function, each supported by a Senior Project Manager who works with project-level PMs within that functional area. A Director of the Center of Excellence (COE) oversees three functional teams: project controls (staffed with cost engineers and schedulers), metrics, and methods and processes. Subject Matter Experts drawn from across the enterprise provide specialized knowledge to the PMO directors and senior PMs who support their respective business units. This structure is generic enough to apply to most organizations and scales as organizational commitment to the PMO grows.

### **Key Performance Indicators: Demonstrating Value**

KPIs are the mechanism through which the NG PMO demonstrates value to the organization. They provide transparency, measure progress, and support tactical decision-making. The NG PMO framework distinguishes between KPIs reported at the project level and KPIs reported at the PMO level.

At the project level, three categories of KPIs are non-negotiable. Project Completion KPIs track whether projects are completed in line with their baselines, including documenting the root causes of any deviations. Estimates and Forecasting KPIs compare actual labor and material costs against baseline and assess the accuracy of forecasts made during execution, again tracking root causes for deviation. Project Success KPIs require the PMO to define at least three success criteria per project beyond schedule and cost, and to track project completion against those criteria. These metrics ensure that the PMO is measuring outcomes rather than activities.

At the PMO level, three additional categories are equally non-negotiable. Stakeholder Satisfaction KPIs define key stakeholder requirements and measure satisfaction against them regularly. Portfolio Management KPIs track key portfolio-level metrics, including alignment, risk, resource distribution, and agility. ROI KPIs ask the fundamental question the PMO's executive sponsors most want answered: Are we improving project ROI across the portfolio? PMOs that fail to track and report on these measures will consistently struggle to justify their existence to organizational leadership.

## **Organizational Alignment: Project vs. Business Endgame**

Organizational alignment is one of the most critical—and most often neglected—elements of PMO design. It requires the PMO to map each of its project management responsibilities to a corresponding business value. The NG PMO framework uses an alignment matrix to make this mapping explicit.

At the mission level, the project purpose is improved project delivery—but the business endgame is value through portfolio management, resource management, and communications. At the strategic level, the project's purpose is to direct the management of one or two high-priority, complex projects—but the business endgame is to ensure that chosen projects advance the company's long-term mission and deliver the best possible return on investment. At the tactical level, the project's purpose is to allocate resources by priority and need, and the business endgame is improved resource management across ongoing and proposed projects. At the operational level, the project purpose is to provide support that strengthens weak areas of PM practice and maintains communications, and the business endgame is integration across the enterprise.

The key principle of organizational alignment in the NG PMO framework is this: every project purpose must match up with a business endgame. If it does not, the initiative should not be considered a viable project within the enterprise.

## **Road Map to PMO Value Maximization**

The NG PMO's road map to value maximization departs from traditional maturity models in an important way. Conventional maturity models treat maturity as a proxy for capability development—the PMO is considered mature when it has developed a broad set of skills and

services. The NG PMO framework redefines maturity in terms of the amount of strategic work performed and the value delivered to the organization.

The road map has four stages. The first and most critical stage is strategic qualification, planning, and alignment of projects—the enterprise portfolio management function. This is the capability the NG PMO must have on day one, operating at Level 5 PMO maturity. The second stage is direct management of the priority complex projects that add the most value to the organization. The NG PMO begins with one or two high-priority projects under its direct management, proving its value in concrete terms before expanding its project load. The third stage is the addition of programs at the departmental level, embedding the PMO further into the organization as resources allow. The fourth stage is the provision of training support and career direction for project managers and PM teams—the operational, people-development function that sustains the PMO’s human capital over time.

This sequencing is intentional. By beginning with strategic portfolio management and direct control of a few high-value projects, the NG PMO generates early wins that are visible and meaningful to executive sponsors. Those early wins build the organizational trust and funding commitment needed to expand the PMO’s scope and capabilities over time.

## **Implementing the NG PMO**

Even the best-designed PMO faces implementation challenges. Identifying those challenges in advance—alongside the opportunities they represent—is a standard risk management practice that is especially important in the context of PMO launch, where organizational resistance can derail even well-designed initiatives before they have a chance to prove their value.

Common implementation challenges include executive buy-in resistance, cultural resistance to change, project manager resistance to new oversight structures, stakeholder resistance, existing project chaos that complicates portfolio alignment, and budget conflicts between competing organizational priorities. Each of these challenges has a corresponding opportunity. Executive resistance, for instance, creates the opportunity to establish the strategic value of the NG PMO directly to leadership—the very conversation the PMO needs to have to earn its mandate. Cultural resistance creates the opportunity to establish a clear project management strategy. Budget

conflicts create the opportunity to demonstrate the PMO's value through improved project prioritization and resource management.

The NG PMO Initiation Checklist provides a structured guide through the implementation process. Key initiation steps include completing the PMO's mission statement, performing the corporate PMO readiness assessment, performing the project manager and talent analysis, identifying industry benchmarks from high-performing PMOs, identifying key stakeholders, articulating the PMO's value proposition, identifying barriers to launch, identifying inherent risks, identifying areas where current PM practice is underserved or underperforming, identifying key resources that can be leveraged, defining KPIs, establishing organizational structure and hierarchy, plotting the road map to organizational expansion, and confirming that executive leaders, stakeholders, and PMs are all on board. The checklist is not merely a to-do list—it functions as a gap analysis tool, ensuring that no critical element of the PMO's foundation is left unaddressed before launch.

## **Sustaining the NG PMO**

Establishing the NG PMO is only the beginning. The PMO must continually adapt to changes in business priorities, financial shifts, project growth and complexity, and evolving organizational needs. It must regularly ask itself: Where does the PMO need to provide more training? Should a new departmental or program management office be established? Should a program or project be terminated? The answers to these questions require ongoing, structured evaluation—not reactive firefighting.

Three agents of sustainability drive the long-term health of the NG PMO: evaluation, training, and succession planning.

### **Evaluation**

The NG PMO must continually prove its value to the corporation through periodic, structured evaluation. Four types of evaluation should be incorporated into the PMO's process: corporate alignment evaluation, PMO functionality evaluation, project management capabilities evaluation, and project manager performance evaluation.

The NG PMO uses a report card and survey framework to make this evaluation systematic. The primary survey—directed at corporate executives, department heads, and subject-matter experts—

consists of two to five questions per category in the PMO report card. A supplemental survey measures stakeholder acceptance among those indirectly involved with the PMO. A third survey, identical to the first, is completed by the PMO team itself as a self-evaluation. Comparing organizational and self-evaluation scores reveals gaps in perception and performance that become the basis for improvement planning. Survey questions are rated on a consistent scale, and the Chief Projects Officer compiles and reports the results to executive leadership. The PMO team then reviews both the organizational report card and their own self-evaluation—a process that generates productive accountability and a clear course for improvement.

It is important to note that this evaluation is not about measuring PM capabilities per se—it is about measuring the PMO's value delivery to the organization. The distinction matters. A PMO mindset, as distinct from a PM mindset, keeps the focus on organizational outcomes rather than technical execution. The three value delivery pillars against which the PMO should always be measured are: providing business value, including better ROI, aligning with defined and stated corporate objectives, and doing the right things at the right time with the right people.

## Training

Training is a non-negotiable component of PMO sustainability, and the Center of Excellence is the organizational home for the PMO's training function. The NG PMO training progression comprises five stages: organizational standards alignment, project management standards, software and tools training, department-specific training, and project management certification support.

The training program begins by ensuring alignment with organizational standards and policies—the foundational layer on which all other training builds. PM industry standards training keeps the team current with evolving best practices. Software and tools training can be administered through supplier education resources and internal tutors, reducing costs while boosting team engagement. Functional directors facilitate department-specific training with support from subject-matter experts. Finally, providing project management certification support—directly or indirectly—to PM support team members creates a talent pipeline of future project managers as current PMs advance to higher levels.

## Succession Planning

Succession planning addresses one of the most commonly overlooked risks in PMO sustainability: the departure or advancement of key personnel. The NG PMO builds succession planning into its structure from the beginning, creating a steady pool of talent at varying skill and leadership levels.

The progression runs from project control specialists (cost engineers, schedulers) through Project Manager, Senior Project Manager, Program Manager, and Portfolio Project Manager or Chief Projects Officer. At each stage, advancement is supported by the PMO's training program, ensuring that the pipeline is actively developed rather than left to chance. Any level of PM may also advance to a Subject Matter Expert role, and executive-level PMs may transition into organizational leadership as executive officers. This progression decreases turnover, aligns with corporate and PM objectives at every level, and ensures the PMO is never dependent on any single indispensable individual.

## **Conclusion**

The Project Management Office is not a failed concept—it is a frequently misdesigned one. The data is clear: most PMOs do not deliver the value they promise, and many do not survive long enough to learn from their early mistakes. The cycle of launch, underperformance, and replacement is a symptom of a design problem that begins with the failure to answer three foundational questions: What is the PMO? What is it for? What does it do?

The Next Generation PMO framework addresses that design problem. It begins not with structure or tools, but with purpose—and it insists on assessment before commitment. It selects from the proven building blocks of existing PMO models, combining directive influence, enterprise scope, strategic approach, and the qualities of alignment, agility, and innovation. It deploys a coherent set of tools to cement those blocks together: a mission statement that functions as a commander's intent, an organizational structure modeled on the interdependence of a living tree, a KPI framework that holds the PMO accountable to measurable value delivery, a road map that defines growth in terms of strategic impact rather than capability accumulation, and an implementation checklist that ensures no critical foundation is left unaddressed at launch.

The NG PMO is then sustained through three agents: regular structured evaluation tied to organizational value delivery, a progressive training program that keeps the team current and

capable, and succession planning that ensures the PMO's human capital grows and renews itself over time.

The Apollo 13 mission survived because Houston had the capability, authority, and mission clarity to be the command center it needed to be. The Next Generation PMO is designed with the same principle in mind. It is not a support function or a bureaucratic oversight layer. It is the project management command center for the enterprise—directive, strategic, aligned, agile, and built to prove its value from day one.

**The problem is real. The solution is achievable. The time to build it right is now.**

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