

Defining Business Objectives Supported by Organizational Maturity and Benefits Management

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INTRODUCTION

All organizations are interested in finding ways in which they can ensure their long-term viability, whether they are private firms looking to maximize their shareholder value, or public sector and not-for-profit organizations seeking to maximize their effectiveness. Gaining a competitive advantage over competitors has been the focus of the organizations since a long time because only a competitive advantage can assure the long-term existence of the organization (Jugdev & Mathur, 2006). Firms that have captured competitive advantage (Porter, 1984) are attempting to maintain their competitiveness by increasing knowledge and managing that knowledge. In a competitive environment, organizations need flexibility to meet customers' demands, by offering customized and high-quality products and services. Organizations have made significant investments in Information Systems and Technology (IS/IT) projects, hoping to obtain competitive advantages, growth and productivity improvement. Project success and failure is one of the most discussed topics in Project Management (Adzmi & Hassan, 2018; Flyvbjerg & Budzier, 2011; Holgeid & Jørgensen, 2020). While managing projects, organizing people and work in an appropriate way is a key success factor. The functional organization, with a distinct hierarchy is being left behind in the modern business world while other organizational structures enabling higher flexibility are becoming more and more dominant (Dinsmore & Cooke-Davies, 2006). For organizations to succeed in the global business competition today, it is necessary that they produce a high standard of performance.

Managing projects competently is not something that a company can achieve by carrying out a few projects, but essentially through its level of organizational maturity (Fabro & Tonchia, 2018). The company, by recognizing its skills and capabilities in project management, as well as its strengths and weaknesses in various dimensions, allows the company to develop the necessary processes for highly efficient project management (Spalek, 2015).

Maturity models became an essential tool in assessing organization's current capabilities and helping them to implement change and improvements in a structured way (Jia et al., 2013). Maturity model is a set of characteristics, attributes, indicators, or patterns that represent progression and achievement in a specific domain or discipline (Caralli et al., 2012). Basically, the purpose of the maturity model is to provide a framework for improving an organization's business result by assessing the organization's strengths and weaknesses, enabling comparisons with similar organizations, and a measure of the cor-

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relation between an organization's (Combe, 1998; Ibbs & Kwak, 2000). There are several reasons why organizations might choose to use a maturity model to assess their current performance, such as:

1. Justifying investment in portfolio, programme or project management improvements.
2. Gaining recognition of service quality to support proposals.
3. Gaining a better understanding of their strengths and weakness to enable improvement to happen.

Maturity model is an important element of strategic planning as it provides a methodology, a road map to determine and compress the gaps in resources and quality (Kerzner, 2005). Working with different types of projects within an organization requires standard models to deliver successful future projects repeatedly, improve both the quality of future projects and gain knowledge and learn from past mistakes.

According to Andersen and Jessen (2003), measuring maturity in organizations is regarded as a subjective instead of objective measurement since most significant research is primarily focusing on what people are doing operationally. Skulmoski (2001) recommends a view where competence and maturity should be linked together for project success and not focusing only on action and where competence should be regarded as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that supports performance. The assessment procedures helped an organization understand where they have been, where they are, and what processes they need to implement, to continue their implementation of management methodologies. As organizations mature in business and project management processes, and their use of information technology, they implement centralized solutions to facilitate these processes. Since 1995, due to the recognition of the importance of benefits realization and management within different sectors, various approaches and models have been developed to help organizations identify, monitor and ultimately achieve the benefits. It is unlikely that benefits will simply emerge, as if by magic, from the introduction of a new technology. Their realization needs to be carefully planned and managed (Markus, 2004).

All organizations seek sustainability, whether public sector organizations looking to maximize their effectiveness or private companies looking to maximize their shareholder value. IS/IT have become critical to ensuring profitability and sustainability (Askedal, 2019). Benefits Management (BM) is a field of growing importance within the area of program and project management (APM, 2012; Axelos, 2011; Breese, 2012; PMI, 2017) since it is recognized that the focus on benefits improves the success rate of projects (Breese et al., 2015; Musawir et al., 2017). Benefits are often identified in the early stages to form the business case and to sell the idea to the stakeholders. A follow-up procedure with the purpose of evaluating those benefits achievement is often missing, and problems arise after the system delivery, when it's time to show if those previous stated benefits have been realized (Remenyi et al., 2007). One of the factors that differentiates successful from less successful companies in their deployment of IS/IT, is the management resolve to evaluate IS/IT investments before and after they occurred. The perception of the continuous unsuccessful IS/IT investments found a new way and approach for how projects are undertaken. The focus should be on the realization of the benefits, since that is the organizations main reason for the investment (Ward & Daniel, 2012). In the following sections we introduce and discuss the concept of maturity model, its usefulness and limitations. The Benefits Management (BM) approach used in the integration process with a maturity model is also addressed. We then present a case study to illustrate that integration, where we show the results of the organizational maturity assessment and how it is used in the implementation of the chosen benefits management approach.

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