

Transforming Program Management in Digital Enterprises

Abstract

Enterprises across the globe need to be agile and adopt new trends in order to stay competitive. CEOs are also focusing on improving ROI by increasing the probability of success of strategic initiatives. Adopting program management standards has become integral to the execution of these strategic initiatives. Disruptive technologies such as social media, mobile, analytics, and cloud are providing enormous opportunities for enterprises to reimagine their business models, deliver innovative products and services, and engage with their customers and employees.

It is imperative to reimagine program management in view of the benefits of adopting digital technologies, techniques and practices such as gamification, optimization, simulation, prescriptive analytics, and social collaboration. They can deliver business value beyond attainment of on-time, on-budget program objectives.

The Digital Reimagination™ Imperative

Enterprises recognize the collective potential of the 'Digital Five Forces'¹: social media, mobility and pervasive computing, Big Data and analytics, cloud, and artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics. These forces enable enterprises to reimagine their business models, products and services, customer segments, channels, business processes, and workplaces in an increasingly dynamic environment. Program management is inherent to any such major transformation and also needs to match the pace of change.

Program management, as a profession, is also being challenged by the prevalence of 'NextGen' norms, brought on partly by the significant presence of Generation Y in the workforce and the emergence of distributed and virtual program teams. These bring increased focus on value enhancement in addition to execution within time and budget constraints.

Program management has to transform into a reimaged program ecosystem where social networking is the new team, partnering is the new enterprise, change is the new delivery, and complexity is the new normal.

Program Management – the Digital Reimagination™ Journey

The transformation of traditional program management into an interactive program ecosystem is envisaged in two stages:

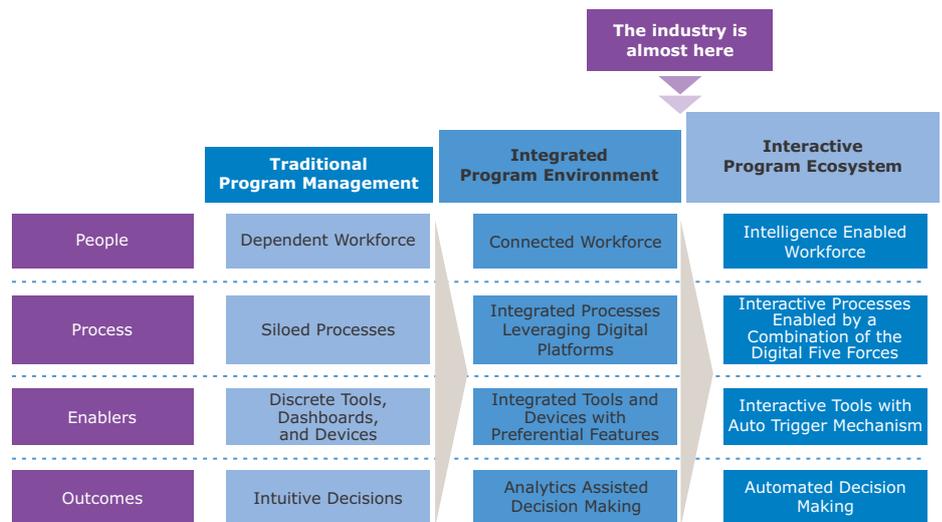
An Integrated Program Environment—Eliminating Silos

The first stage involves the use of digital technologies as a platform to integrate program management processes that were being conducted in silos with outcomes and related information monitored separately. For instance, program communication can be channeled through social media, tasks can be performed using mobility devices and tools, and applications and data can be hosted on the cloud. An integrated program environment therefore results in an enormous variety, volume, and velocity of structured and unstructured data that can be further analyzed to make event-driven decisions.

A leading European B2B manufacturer uses an online Project and Portfolio Management tool with in-built analytical capabilities and an integrated social platform for easy communication and collaboration, eliminating the need for email. With more than 200,000 client contacts across 120 countries, this tool enabled employees to communicate and collaborate effectively, and ensured seamless availability of information. This led to increased employee productivity, increased agility and collaboration, and effective resource management through enhanced transparency of data.

An Interactive Program Ecosystem—Moving towards Interaction of Integrated Processes

In the second stage, in-built intelligence is enhanced by event-driven decisions in program management processes, resulting in interaction between processes. This event-driven analysis and prescriptive action, leading to optimization of process outcomes aided by enhanced decision-making capability, forms the core of a reimagined interactive program ecosystem.



Evolution of the Interactive Program Ecosystem, which makes the process of capturing and analyzing event-related information more autonomous and enables a more effective response.

Interactive Program Ecosystem in a Digital Enterprise

A few program management components that showcase the transformation to interactive processes in a program ecosystem using digital technologies are:

Converging Processes—Analyzing Stakeholder and Communication Management

In a program environment, with stakeholders communicating on social media, their needs can be assessed by tracking trending discussions and performing sentiment analysis. Communicating using digital technologies enables interaction between activities to generate insights and trigger responses for stakeholder management, leading to convergence of these processes.

Flat Hierarchy

The Harvard Business Review states that there is a growing body of evidence that shows that organizations with flat structures outperform those with more traditional hierarchies in most situations.² It demonstrates the effectiveness of small, agile, and autonomous teams. As digital technologies make it easier to work in a distributed manner, flat structures will become increasingly common.

Democratized Decision Making

Many organizations, including Wikimedia, 3M, Red Hat, and AEGON have tried bringing diverse stakeholders into the strategy creation process. A similar approach can be executed effectively in a digital enterprise, with wider participation for strategic decisions in program management. In a digital enterprise, participative communication paves the way for democratized decision-making, enhances equality among ranks, renews motivation, and therefore increases the probability of success.

Prescriptive Risk Management

Prescriptive risk management in a program can result from interaction of all constituent processes, including those for management of costs, resources, vendors, benefits, stakeholders, and communication. In a digital enterprise, program management will employ event driven analysis, with identified patterns of outcomes, to predict risks and their impact with enhanced consistency and prescribe mitigating mechanisms.

An Interactive Learning Environment with Gamification

Program management can use the infrastructure of a digital enterprise to transform training and knowledge management, addressing individual requirements and program needs. Gamification can also be employed to encourage employees to share innovative ideas, initiate new team members, and encourage experts across geographies in social collaboration, knowledge sharing, and problem solving.

A large US insurer implemented gamification as part of its new employee induction process, which not only enhanced participation but also reduced the overall duration of the induction process by 40%.

Dynamic Program Planning and Tracking

Activities that drive interactive planning processes include automation of updates on tasks and their completion status, time sheets, change requests, identification of training requirements, and program notifications and dashboards through mobile devices. These will, in turn, interact with processes that manage risks, resources, scope, time and costs through built-in, auto-triggering mechanisms in a connected program ecosystem.

Benefits Management through Visualization

Digital technologies uncover insights that can open up new avenues to enhance program effectiveness and efficiency. Dynamic changes that occur in the program environment can be predicted and simulated, along with their outcomes, and can be accommodated during execution.

Conclusion

As enterprises leverage the Digital Five Forces to identify new channels of revenue, they can also transform program management into a connected program ecosystem of interactive processes, through cross-functional, cross-organizational collaboration.

The reimagined interactive program ecosystem is the way forward for companies to operate in a digitally disruptive environment and also address the perceived 'NextGen' challenges of program management. This will lead to reduced time-to-market and effective use of skills across boundaries, and result in a more forward-looking, innovative work environment, enabling enhancement of business value.

References

- [1] TCS, Winning in the Digital Consumer Economy Requires Digital Reimagination 2014, accessed September 3, 2015, <http://www.tcs.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/White-Papers/Winning-digital-consumer-economy-Digital-Reimagination-0614-1.pdf>
- [2] Harvard Business Review, Hierarchy is Overrated, November 2013, accessed September 3, 2015, <https://hbr.org/2013/11/hierarchy-is-overrated>
- [3] National Grid Drives Process Change with iRise, accessed on November 2, 2015, <http://www.irise.com/resource/national-grid-drives-change-with-irise/>

National Grid, a multinational electricity and gas company headquartered in London, used visualization and simulation techniques to predict shortcomings and change project management processes at an enterprise level. As a result, proposed benefits were realized, end-user satisfaction was much higher, and speed-to-market was significantly faster.³

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