

Evolving from a PMO to an EPMO

The Problem

After embarking on an Agile transformation across the enterprise with Accelare's help, the executive team at a healthcare payer realized they could now execute work quickly, but was it the right work to deliver their strategy and ensure full adoption of Agile? They knew they would need a dedicated team with the right capabilities and processes to do this. They saw the existing PMO as the best team to assist, but in its current state it was not ready to play this type of strategic role. The PMO needed to evolve to an Enterprise Program Management Office (EPMO) to address this challenge.

Leadership was looking for a way to ensure the right work was being resourced and managed to execute their strategy with the newly adopted Agile work model. Their challenge centered around visibility and transparency of priorities so the executive team could, with sufficient information, make the best decisions at the right time. They also needed to create a direct connection between business lines needs and capability investments, irrespective of who owned the capabilities. They knew a strong strategic team was needed to facilitate and support them in changing the way strategic decisions were made. Without this, achieving their strategic goals would have continued to be elusive.



How We Helped

Accelare broke it down with the current PMO Director into two objectives – change the PMO and change the organization.

To change the EPMO, we first looked at it through a capability-based lens. Our approach required the client to understand what capabilities and services an EPMO would provide the organization. We achieved this by taking the following approach:

1. Defined the strategy and created alignment to organizational needs: The team created a new purpose, mission, and vision of the EPMO, moving them from a PMO to an EPMO.
2. Built an EPMO capability model: This served as the baseline to determine how each contributed to the new EPMO purpose, mission, and vision so we could assess where they were at:
 - a. Which capabilities do they have today?
 - b. Where are they not efficient at delivering those capabilities? Which ones are they good at?
 - c. What do they need to build, buy, broker?
3. Designed the team structure, roles and responsibilities: Do job descriptions change? Are new roles needed to deliver capabilities? Do we outsource or broker talent?
4. Created a staffing model: We assessed the existing team to design development plans to mature the team.

In addition to this effort, we found it was critical to inventory all the active “work” and “in-flight” projects that utilized resources across the organization. Leadership had lost sight of priorities through various project intake processes and committees, leading to limited view to make decisions.

This inventory was a required step to give leadership the ability to evaluate work against a set of strategic criteria. We made the valuation criteria unique to them and plotted it against a high-level work effort valuation. This gave leadership the ability to prioritize as a team what the organization would focus on to execute the strategic plan.

Building upon this foundation, we then collaborated with the client to:

- Determine the necessary portfolio design that the EPMO would manage
- Simplify governance and committee structures to enable decision-making at the right level
- Design and execute a process for project initiation to empower the organization to share ideas

Outcomes

The new EPMO was established, supported by Executive leadership. This brought new capabilities to the organization that gave them the ability to stay agile and make decisions effectively across the enterprise, while executing their strategic plan.

Old PMO View	New EPMO View
Task managers	Enablers of business outcomes
Order takers	Strategic enablers of business outcome delivery
Responsible for dates & scope	Responsible for measurable business outcomes
Project or silo thinking	Enterprise thinking of the end-to-end process

They built their portfolio management capabilities and aligned existing staff competencies to career paths for existing PMO while evolving to an “E-PMO”.

Finally, they created a Center of Excellence (CoE) – a highly functioning team of Program Management Office staff that became part of a matrix structure. The CoE was aligned to an operational Business Unit and took overall strategic direction from the Director of PMO.