



Project Control Functions

A Benchmark of Current Business Practices

ORGANIZATIONS DO NOT perform project control functions well. Managing issue, risk and change control processes are particularly troublesome. These conclusions are among the results of a survey of fifty-four project management practitioners by the Center for Business Practices, the research arm of the consulting and training organization, PM Solutions.

The CBP surveyed senior practitioners with knowledge of their organizations' project management practices and business results. The survey, *Project Controls Functions: A Benchmark of Current Business Practices*, was designed to investigate best practices in the performance of project control functions in organizations.

Project control functions include:

- Educating the Project Team on Proper Project Management Processes
- Facilitating/Overseeing Project Planning/Control Sessions
- Developing the Project Schedule and Work Breakdown Structure
- Managing the Critical Path to Ensure Schedules are Being Met
- Estimating Project Costs
- Tracking and Analyzing Project Costs
- Managing the Process of Issue, Risk and Change Control
- Documenting and Delivering Project Status Information

The survey results revealed that half of the organizations responding performed project control functions average to poorly. Three functions in particular were cited for needed improvement: managing the process of issue, risk and change control; educating the project team on proper project management processes; and estimating project costs.

Organizations are best at documenting and delivering project status information.

They also showed that most organizations do not recognize project controls as a specific job role. Project control functions are typically performed by project managers, who either report to a centralized project office or to specific departments within their organization.

Other observations and conclusions drawn from the study include:

About half of the organizations responding have one role in their organization performing project control functions. In the majority of those organizations, that function is performed by project managers. And a number of those organizations have specific project control specialists (19.4%).

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In most organizations (83%), project control functions are performed by multiple roles, although most are project managers (64.8%) or project coordinators (38.9%).

A majority of those performing project control functions report to either a centralized project office (33.3%) or to decentralized departments within their organization (37.0%).

More than half of the organizations responding use or plan to use augmented services (consulting, staffing, outsourcing) to perform project control functions.

Sarbanes-Oxley and other government mandates have had little effect on organization's project control processes.

Tracking actuals, improving project management software tools, creating a strong project management governance structure, and educating on the benefits of using project controls were cited as means to improve the organization's project controls.

Survey Respondent Profile

The survey reports data from 54 organizations. Most of the responses came from project/program managers (40.7%) followed by project/program office managers (16.7%), and directors of project/program management (14.8%). The size of their company and their industry was similar to other studies we've done, with all size organizations represented; the most represented included Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (15.1%), Manufacturing (15.1%), Construction (15.1%), Information (13.2%), and Finance & Insurance (11.3%). More than 40% of the companies had annual sales of \$1 billion, and 33.3% had annual sales less than \$100 million.



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CBP Benchmarking Consortium

Membership in the CBP Consortium provides you access to our PM Knowledge Center, a website that houses the complete CBP Library (newsletters, research reports, benchmarking forum reports, measurement tools, etc.), and access to hundreds of PM best practices. Individual membership includes a free registration at a PM Benchmarking Forum (see below). Organizational members also receive a copy of each of our PM Practices books, two free delegate pass to our benchmarking forums, and a customized benchmarking survey administered through the CBP website.

CBP Research

The CBP conducts original research that will help you improve your project management practices. Research reports are available on: *The Value of Project Management*, *The State of the PM Industry*, *PM Maturity Benchmark*, *The Value of Project Management in IT Organizations*, *Getting Executive Buy-in*, *Project Portfolio Management* and *The Value of Project Management Training*.

Project Management Benchmarking Forum

The Forum is a structured exchange of knowledge among senior-level project practitioners. During the facilitated two-day Forum you'll identify and agree upon project management best practices that you can apply immediately to benefit your organization.

pmValue Measurement

The CBP has developed a system for measuring the impact of project management improvement initiatives to your organization. The CBP will work with you to develop a pmValue Measurement System customized for your organization.

People on Projects: A Project Management Best Practices Report

In this succinctly written monthly e-newsletter, discover best practices that help you develop and enhance your project management competency as well as lead to creating a superior project organization.

Project Management Books

In partnership with international publisher Marcel Dekker, the CBP publishes the PM Practices Series of books, which includes *The Strategic Project Office*, *Project Management Maturity Model*, *The Superior Project Manager*, *The Superior Project Organization*, and *Managing Multiple Projects*. Other books published by the CBP include *Project Portfolio Management*, *Justifying the Value of Project Management*, and *What Makes a Good Project Manager*.

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