

## ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE PROJECTS. THIRTY-FOUR INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS. FOURTEEN MONTHS TO COMPLETE. \$200 MILLION BUDGET. OVERWHELMED YET?

Program management has been pulling the strings to deliver a large volume of complex projects for companies and utilities across varying industries worldwide for decades. From renovating multiple terminals at a busy commercial airport to overhauling the water infrastructure of a city, program management is a proven stress-reliever, saving time and money while reducing risk. But how can the program management mold be tailored to each unique set of challenges?

#### WHAT IS THE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT MOLD?

Program management is — in application and practice — a fluid project delivery service that groups similar projects in coordinated fashion for a range of industries, from power to transportation and aviation to water. However, it can require knowledge, skills, tools and techniques not always available to a customer in-house or within the scope of capability.

"It's a flexible program solution that can adjust for a client's specific need or requirement," says Bob Wolfe, the program management director at Burns & McDonnell. "We can adjust our staffing levels based on a client's internal resource capacity or timeline of the program. For example, if a client would prefer to manage permitting in-house, we are flexible and experienced in integrating those resources to help

manage consistency across the board. On any project, it's critical to help make sure that the project has one voice and that the team works in line with the same project goals."

What constitutes a program has become flexible based on industry needs. After the Northeast blackout of 2003, utilities in the U.S. found themselves inundated with new federal reliability provisions and standards for the power grid. These mandatory regulations turned into billion-dollar upgrade projects across the country, requiring extensive program management work. However, now that those infrastructure upgrades are almost complete, utilities have seen a renewed focus on maintenance updates for resiliency.

"The program management delivery model in the transmission and distribution industry started with billion-dollar reliability projects that included long-haul transmission lines with multiple substations," says Scott Newland, a senior vice president at Burns & McDonnell. "Now the industry is converting to billion-dollar portfolios of resiliency projects executed through a portfolio management model." >>>

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### CUSTOMER-FOCUSED BENEFITS FROM INDUSTRY TO INDUSTRY

Program management benefits are widely known among the leading industry players, specifically management of scope, time and cost, and risk. These are often the drivers that encourage customers to turn to the market for program management.

**Scope:** After defining the range of services needed, programs and portfolios often take hundreds of people at times to execute work, which can be an unrealistic hiring spike for a one-time project.

**Time and cost:** It is common for programs and portfolios to have multiple aspects of specialized processes and resource needs, which can become costly and time-consuming if not consolidated within an overarching plan.

**Risk:** With multiple contracts and various firms working on programs and portfolios, it can be difficult to keep track of all the moving parts, increasing the possibility that something vital will fall through the cracks.

"There are a lot of seams to manage, and program managers have to know how to identify and manage those seams," Wolfe says. "Ultimately, the program manager owns those seams."

By handing over the reins of a complex program or portfolio to one manager, the overall responsibility for the successful completion lies squarely on that set of shoulders, adding pressure to find the right partner.

#### MAKE SURE THE MOLD FITS LIKE A GLOVE

Program management can easily translate between industries. No matter the industry, program managers handle budgets, schedules, staffing, contracts and communication across teams. However, two major changes can make sure the benefits are tailored for each individual customer: integrated technology and an industry-specific program manager.

The future of program management is in the development and implementation of new technology, but the customized benefit for customers relies on the integration of technology. From unmanned aerial systems (better known as drones) and augmented reality to customized system dashboards and real-time data reporting, the information captured and available is only as valuable as the program manager and customer's ability to access and interpret it. By integrating the tools and systems on a program from the start, customers can see consistent data



# A COHESIVE PROJECT CYCLE SCHEDULE AND COST RECORD

**PROGRAM MANAGERS NEED AN INTEGRATED SET OF** TOOLS TO EXECUTE PROJECTS. WHEN THEY ALL TALK TOGETHER -AND CONTINUOUSLY UPDATE IN **REAL TIME AS PROJECTS PROGRESS** THAT IS THE TRUE DIFFERENTIATOR.

SCHEDULE

in one dashboard that can be accessed from anywhere in the world at any time.

Hiring a program manager experienced in the customer's specific industry is also vital for success. Program management for an aviation program might include landside, airside, refueling and engineering of gates all very different functions. On the other hand, program management for a utility could involve community relations, engineering, permitting and siting.

Program management across industries and regions requires experience and research to understand the unique and specific needs. If a program manager doesn't know the steps to construct a transmission line or the duration each takes, he or she has to rely on someone else to help build the schedule. Similarly, a utility program manager with no experience in the water

industry won't know how much it costs to repair a wastewater treatment plant or to bore under critical infrastructure to install a water pipeline, putting the cost estimate at risk.

"Program management is a proven contracting strategy implemented by many industries," Newland says. "Many of the project management tools, staff skills, responsibilities and processes are transferable across industries, but the key to success is pairing these program management tools, experience and processes with technical excellence."

Ultimately, an industry-specific program manager will not only have the tools and processes necessary to complete a customer's program but also come armed with hands-on experience and best practices knowledge from diverse industries. That way the customer can benefit from the entire package.