

PMO history



Big changes in programme and project management have sparked conversation, but what impact have they had? Has anything really changed since the 90s?

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100 years ago

(approximately)

Scientific management method

Frederick Taylor introduced the idea of increasing the number and complexity of projects managed by single organisations.

30s

First project office

Possibly the first recorded use of the “project office” expression, developed by the U.S. Air Corps (Crawford & Cabanis-Brewin, 2010).

50s

US military complex missile systems PMO

This PMO realised the benefits of centralising funding into work packages instead of separate components. So, the concept of improving budget predictions, creating a standard phased planning approach and identifying non-strategic initiatives before fund allocation was born.

80s

Exported to construction and IT Industries as a result of computer tech advancement

Advancements in technology allowed the PMO concept to roll out across the construction and IT industries, as well as others.

90s

Professional associations mobilised / industry standards met

Professional associations and project management certifications gained traction and became recognised industry standards: Project Management Institute (PMI), PRINCE2 and the International Project Management Association (IPMA).

The need for a standardised and coordinated approach gained momentum to improve the efficiency of project delivery and eliminate delays and overspend.

Out of this grew...

Portfolio Management Office: Multiple projects of programmes, usually organised by function or investment

Programme Management Office: Multiple linked projects, forming a programme of work. Project level and programme level objectives apply.

Project Management Office: Single project (single or multifaceted) not a common objective.