



Project Assistants Newsletter

March 2010

Tips from the Chief

The Case for Project & Portfolio Management (PPM)

How do astronomers know there are planets outside of our solar system? There's no *direct evidence* of this as we haven't yet seen these planets. Instead, we know they exist solely because of *indirect evidence*, the gravitational wobble of certain stars.

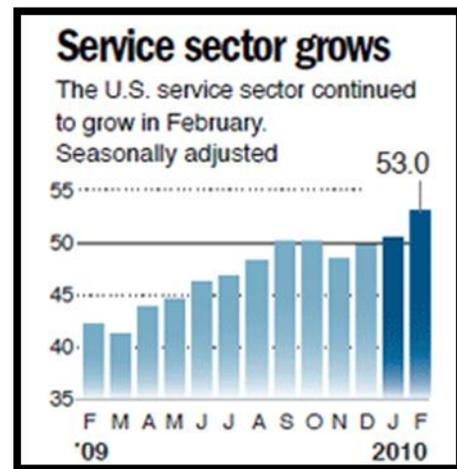
The traditional approach to justifying PPM investment involves comparing pre-investment, project management-related metrics (such as projects finishing quicker, costing less, fewer projects being cancelled) with post-investment metrics – and thereby determining the ROI. The challenge with evaluating ROI using this *direct evidence* is that because the pre-investment project management landscape was (at the very least) less mature, it's difficult to capture the project management-related metrics that are necessary to allow you to accurately make this comparison.

With this reality in mind, there may be a substitute for direct evidence. Like the astronomer who successfully infers the existence of planets by observing the gravitational wobble of a star, we can use indirect evidence to demonstrate the value of PPM investment. Following are a few examples of indirect evidence that helps us assess the value of PPM investment:

- Project cancellation rates: What percentage of projects is cancelled before consuming its original budget/schedule?
- Use it or lose it budget mentality: This type of indirect evidence, often demonstrated by

Service Sector Growing at Fastest Rate Since 2008...

According to a recent study by the Institute for Supply Management, growth in the U.S. service sector, accounting for almost 80% of U.S. jobs, is currently higher than at any time during the past two years.



But how does this translate to project management and improved PPM capabilities? According Robert Half International, 10% of U.S. executives say they'll be increasing professional staffing during the second quarter of 2010. One of the reasons businesses are increasing their budgets for professional hires is the increased availability of spending for project budgets that had been virtually nonexistent since the December 2007 start of this recession.

Business hiring decisions are, of course, still tempered by caution due to concern about the strength of the recovery, and many staffing decisions reflect this caution through a desire to hire temporary, more flexible headcount (often via

a large spike in fiscal year-end spending, often indicates a rigid approach to project approval and ongoing evaluation, as opposed to one which allows for the consistent ebb and flow of projects into and out of the portfolio based on availability of timely and accurate key project indicators (KPIs) for all active projects

[Contact us](#) to learn more about these and other indirect measurements available to drive the business case for PPM investment!



For a more detailed discussion of these concepts you can view a recording of this webinar – [Evolve or Die: How Organizations Use Project & Portfolio Management to Adapt to Change](#).

2010 Webinar Series

Topic: What Keeps a PMO Director Awake at Night: Selling the Value of Project & Portfolio Management (PPM) to your Executive Team

Date: Thursday, April 29th

Time: 3:00 pm EST

Project Assistants is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the second webinar of our 2010 Webinar Series. On Thursday, April 29th at 3:00 PM EST, Project Assistants' CEO Gus Cicala will address ***What Keeps a PMO Director Awake at Night: Selling the Value of PPM to your Executive Team***

Congratulations! Your company has finally taken the plunge and has decided to invest in a PMO....now what?

When organizations invest in project management, there is typically some level of reticence over

temp-to-perm or short-term consulting engagements). And in the Project Management world, organizations are doing this by hiring flexible staff for key project roles, including project managers.

Project Assistants has built a solid reputation for providing project managers with the right tools, capabilities and processes to do their job effectively. Our overall focus on providing the best PPM services available, combined with our proven QA process in evaluating personnel, uniquely qualifies us to identify and attract the best candidates for our customers.

We differentiate our PPM Staffing Services by providing a comprehensive managed service that includes the proper setup, implementation and review of project management and governance methodology. [Contact us](#) to learn more about Project Assistants' [PPM Staffing Services](#).

Project Assistants' Ongoing PPM-focused Webinar Series

As we begin the third year of our very successful Webinar Series, we want to remind you that recordings of our previous webinars are available for you to download and review at your convenience. Please visit our [website](#) to access these recordings, and don't hesitate to [contact us](#) with any questions.

Executive Track

- Evolve or Die: How Organizations Use PPM to Adapt to Change
- Making It Stick: The Project Management Adoption Challenge
- Executive Transformation: What Your Executive Team Needs to Know about PPM
- Resource Management: The Keystone to Successful PPM

PPM Strategy Track

- Which Came First: The Project or the Portfolio?
- Achieving Your Business Objectives: Best Practices for Integrating Portfolio Management Strategies with Project

concerns that this spend is a luxury earmarked as what some might consider *unnecessary overhead*. Many PMOs are created with the expectation that they will quickly deliver a significant ROI, and with this expectation often comes a sense that the PMO is already a target for the next budget cut.

In this webinar, Mr. Cicala will address how to identify and manage these sometimes overly optimistic expectations. We will discuss what these expectations are, why they are probably warranted, and how to translate these expectations into a realistic approach (i.e. develop a plan for incremental increases in ROI that will help create a mood that promotes continue investment).

This webinar, which is offered at no cost, will last for one hour and will include time for Q&A. Please [contact us](#) with any questions or click here to register.

Management Excellence in Execution

- Building a Strategy for Integrating Program, Project, and Knowledge Management
- Which Came First – The Project or the Portfolio?

PPM Technology Track

- Best Practices for Integrating Portfolio, Project & Knowledge Management by Leveraging the Microsoft EPM & MOSS Solutions

Enterprise Project Management: Best Practices for Optimizing Resource Management

At Project Assistants we are THE EXPERTS in Project & Portfolio Management, devoted to effectively creating, enhancing and supporting our clients' project management infrastructures – the people, processes and technology that work together to help you reach your organizational goals.

For more information about Project Assistants, Inc., please go to www.projectassistants.com or call us at 1-800-642-9259.

