
Case Study:

Revitalizing a Project Management Office (PMO) for Salt River



Challenge

Every day, in Central Arizona, more than two million people count on Salt River Project (SRP) to provide the electricity and water they need. For over 100 years, the utility has navigated changing service demands and infrastructure needs to deliver greater value to its customers. And now, like all utilities, SRP is operating amidst industry change and economic challenges.

With the need for efficient, effective IT evolution in mind, SRP asked Point B to help reinvent its fledgling Project Management Office (PMO). The goal: to provide the vision, roadmap, hiring criteria and sense of urgency for the PMO to be faster and more effective in executing the utility's strategic IT projects.

**“Point B was great at simplifying—
making things easy and actionable.**

**They didn't get caught up in the
complexity or bureaucracy.”**

--KEVIN NIELSEN
MANAGER OF INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, SALT
RIVER PROJECT

A practical focus

Point B began by getting to know and understand the culture at SRP and making practical suggestions about the PMO's vision and responsibilities. We worked closely with Kevin Nielsen and other leadership, to redefine expectations, streamline processes and align responsibilities with authority—all with the goal of realizing IT project benefits much more rapidly.

High-caliber leadership

Point B recommended that SRP's new PMO vision elevate the role of project manager to require stronger leadership skills. While we assisted SRP in the selection process of their new project managers, SRP asked us to temporarily backfill several of those positions to keep projects going and to demonstrate what SRP's new caliber of project management could look like.

Proof of concept

To overcome any initial skepticism about a "new, improved" PMO, we prioritized a number of small but quick and visible wins to make sure that the PMO was earning its keep. Before long, the reenergized PMO realized enough

wins that stakeholders began to take notice. As IT managers saw stronger leadership capabilities in the revitalized PMO, they were comfortable delegating IT projects that they would once have held onto. The result was a rapid cultural shift at SRP, with a leap in productivity and energy.

IT value

Within its first four months, the revitalized PMO dramatically increased its value, visibility and relevance in the eyes of its internal customers and utility executives. Just one example: “The new project managers we've hired have taken over a major project in our Distribution/Transmission unit and brought it under control and under budget,” Nielsen said. “We'd never have been able to do it with our old PMO structure and project managers. The bottom line? IT and business managers who once bypassed the PMO are now calling and asking for resources. And in an era of cost cutting, SRP's PMO is delivering such high value that it recently warranted an additional hire.

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