

# Making Mega Impacts Across the Enterprise

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## Maximizing value with enterprise projects

By Anthony Carter

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### Today's Environment

Improvements in the enterprise can be slow to come, particularly with a dispersed approach to project management. If you have dozens of projects going, your teams are spending a lot of time moving them forward to completion. With so many projects under way, it may become difficult to identify the cost savings from the projects and use teamwork across multiple groups to get things done more efficiently. Team members tell you that the projects are different and that each creates its own value based on the business case—and while you may agree, you may also be wondering if there's room for improvement.

If you find yourself mired in multiple disjointed improvement projects, you may want to consider enterprise project management to streamline projects and maximize impact. It may require more coordination, but an orchestrated, lean approach will yield much greater return on investment (ROI) in the long run.

### Point B's Perspective

Point B recommends looking at your company as a system and diagnosing issues from that perspective. The system is your business, and you want all aspects of your business to seamlessly work together.

Taking a holistic look at the system will help you identify the problems that are preventing your company from achieving its goals, addressing them in an efficient, sustainable process, and repeating the process elsewhere in your organization. Let's break it down.

### Identify the issues.

The first step to tackling this issue is identifying the big problems within the organization. Take pains to gather honest, clear-sighted feedback here by enlisting managers, senior leaders, the C-suite, customers, other employees and additional stakeholders—and then asking them to be completely candid. Chances are, they know what's holding the business back.

Next, define success for your company. What are your business goals? What's keeping you from achieving them? How will you measure success? Create specific criteria for measuring the success of each project.

Then ask yourself this: Which of the potential problems has the biggest impact on the organization? Validate your findings with key stakeholders, especially customers.

### Assess the ROI.

Develop a business case that addresses the ROI for each project opportunity. Keep the big picture in mind—don't get bogged down in minutiae. Look for the project(s) that will result in relative improvement across the board, because the financials will change as the project develops. The business case should clearly identify the value of the project, cost estimates to fix the problem, and a reasonable timeline for deliverables.

### Develop the building blocks.

Enterprise projects may look like a single monolithic project, but that's rarely the case. In reality, these projects can be broken down into multiple smaller ones that build on each other. Lean projects, in particular, can help you further develop improvements, amplifying

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the impact on the other projects in your enterprise project portfolio. Just like building a house, to complete the work, you will need a plan, a location, a foundation, resources, tools, and coordination through governance.

You'll need to create specific projects that are aligned with your enterprise goals, and you'll need to assign separate owners to orchestrate the improvements. A certified Master Black Belt or Black Belt can expedite improvements through the use of methodologies, tools and project leadership.

### **Provide governance.**

Governance is required to ensure that all subordinate projects stay aligned with the overall enterprise project goals. Each project has the potential to drift towards its own customization. By using governance, you ensure that any changes in direction are approved before they are implemented. Because enterprise projects rely on a collection of carefully developed projects for maximum impact, it is critical to provide governance for all projects. Each project team should meet on a weekly basis and should receive governance guidance on a monthly basis, at a minimum.

### **Measure success.**

When the team implements improvements, be sure to capture the benefits your organization realizes as a result. Earlier, you worked to define success for your organization—now's the time to put that to work. Has the project been as successful as it could have been? What factors led to its success, and its shortcomings? Some companies hold "postmortems" after a project ends to better understand what worked and what didn't.

When calibrating success, use quantitative measures to capture the benefits that each project yields. You can purchase formal systems to do this, but you may not have to if you follow consistent rules for how information is captured and accounted for.

One best practice is to roll up the savings and/or improvements to the enterprise level, making it part of a single effort. Otherwise, you can unintentionally create

a situation where the overall benefit to the enterprise is compromised for local improvements that have a greater local project benefit. This approach for enterprise accounting has been shown to work on a global basis across multiple industries.

Most enterprise projects will require a pilot phase to evaluate and mitigate risk—not to mention finding opportunities for improvement—before the project is broadly deployed. Typically, projects are piloted locally, and the project team restricts the number of users based on certain project criteria—for example, training, job role, location, systems impacted and so on.

### **Repeat the process.**

Due to the longer duration and complexity of enterprise projects, companies often use a phased based approach. The foundational improvement project is typically done first to maximize the return on future projects.

Here's the beauty of enterprise project management: when you use the same methodology on subsequent improvement projects, you're developing a repeatable system that will benefit your organization for years to come. Repeating your project management approach is shown to have long-lasting impacts for companies that are diligent with their project execution. Think of it this way: You're creating a common language and roadmap for your employees to follow every time they engage in a project—saving time and money by avoiding confusion and duplication of effort.

## **The Bottom Line**

Enterprise projects offer an excellent opportunity to streamline improvement projects and maximize impact. Taking on enterprise projects requires more planning and coordination than random improvement projects, but will yield much greater ROI.

Following a systematic approach to enterprise projects will eliminate opportunities for failure and increase your probability of success—delivering more value to your customers while achieving your business goals.