Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud: New Tools of the Trade
Executive Overview

Today’s project-driven organization must embrace technology advances to successfully execute a project. Gone are the days of siloed projects, static reporting and a lack of visibility. In its place are collaborative and social project management advances, real-time contextual reporting with role-tailored dashboards, and an enterprise perspective to executing a project. The tools at the project manager’s disposal must incorporate these elements to allow organizations to take advantage of new project management technologies and facilitate their incorporation for effective project delivery. This white paper links these new project management requirements to Oracle’s Project Portfolio Management (PPM) Cloud applications to illustrate why the project management function must change the way it manages projects.

Project Portfolio Management: Then and Now

It is always instructive to take a step back to see where we have been and where we are headed. The same principle holds true in the Project Portfolio Management arena, where focus areas in the early part of the previous decade differ significantly from focus areas we are currently addressing.

The table below looks at the issues of significance at the PMO and enterprise level in the early 2000’s through latter part of the decade. As technology capabilities and organizational project maturity improved, so too did the requirements for managing a project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Management</td>
<td>Simplified Scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>Collaborative Staffing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>Real-time Embedded Analytics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Entry</td>
<td>Project Financial Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned Value Management</td>
<td>Social Project Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Automation</td>
<td>Mobile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The role of the project manager also began to change, although the tools at his/her disposal did not meet the shift in requirements.

Today’s project manager must be a supreme communicator, with a broad working knowledge across multiple domains including project financial management and execution management. The way that a project team functions has significantly changed as well, with newer, social oriented technologies making the process of information dissemination and team communications much more fluid.

Millennial talent entering the workforce and executing on projects has also changed and expects technology that is easy to use and understand, meshing hand-in-hand with the business process. Mobile support is key, since is provides access for the hyper-connected ‘on-the-go’ workforce of today, as well as social capabilities, for collaboration between team members is fundamental to project success.

These radical shifts in the management of projects are necessitating the use of tools geared to accommodate the changes, not only to keep up with the new requirements, but also supersede legacy and archaic methods to execute projects successfully.

In summary, today’s project-centric enterprise requires modern tools to plan and schedule projects collaboratively, and get the work done using social, mobile and cloud technologies to connect with each other instantly, anytime and anywhere.
The Social Project Enterprise

The shift in managing a project, as noted above, has resulted in the need for the social project enterprise. This is a major area for project management, where project team members are always collaborating with each other to get the work done; it is intrinsic to the fundamental nature of project work. To wit, the diverse and far-flung nature of project work in today’s business environment dictates the use of social and collaborative tools to assist in employee productivity and business efficiency.

This melding of project management and social networking is often referred to as Social Project Management.

Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud lets you drive real-time collaboration with native social project communication tools. Social collaboration and task management are merged, letting project participants discuss their work or annotate documents in real-time for more effective exchanges and content reviews. Collaboration is carried out in the context of the tasks, using Oracle Social Network for conversations embedded in the project work, so team members don’t lose time searching for that instant message, email thread, or document.

Team members can manage all work and related interactions in a consolidated place, no longer having to track administrative and project work in different places since all tasks are managed and progressed in a single view.

Figure 1 - Empower the Project Team with Social Task Management
The goal of productivity is pervasive throughout Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud so social capabilities are embedded throughout the solution, to ensure secure consistent communication across the project teams wherever they may be. This is manifested throughout the application so when a user executes a business process, they not only have the transactional application at their fingertips, but also have things like e-mail, SMS, text, instant messaging, chat – all providing a number of different ways to interact with people and/or groups of people, both internal and external to the project and enterprise.

But in the end, connecting people is relatively easy. The larger issue is finding a way to serve up relevant, system-generated, actionable information, in real time, which will allow for more streamlined execution on key business processes.

Many companies have seen incremental improvements in their productivity by deploying departmental collaboration, business process management, and content management solutions. But the real key to success is becoming a social enterprise, and having a strategic approach to managing this collaborative project content, to prevent valuable knowledge being lost. A company needs to adopt a unified infrastructure that delivers a seamless solution with a modern user experience for all business requirements, including customer engagement, business execution, and information management.

The Importance of Analytics

With 52% of senior executives globally stating failure to successfully execute projects in order to deliver strategic results¹, project managers must ensure that projects are delivered on-time, on-budget, and in-scope, and that every team member has the right information in the right context at the right time. What does this mean?

- The right information. Each team member needs data oriented to their project, role and phase in the plan. For example, a project controller’s default view should only provide information relevant from a project financial management view; not the inner workings of a Gantt chart.
- In the right context. Team members need data placed into the context in which they operate so they don’t have to pivot to a different system to find it. Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud’s native integration with HR, Financial, and Procurement systems ensures this context.
- At the right time. Batch processes, manual gathering activities and weekly reports don’t cut it anymore. Project managers want the state of progress at their fingertips on demand, not on Friday afternoons after the project management office has crunched the spreadsheets.

True project intelligence results from having the right people looking at the data, and having tools that allow them to do two things:

- Monitor key performance indicators and business trends that notify them that the “rules of the game” might be changing
- Provide tools that allow them to simulate different scenarios, and develop strategic and tactical plans to be successful under changing business conditions.
While there has been an increasing emphasis on all manner of dashboard applications attempting to accomplish the first point, there is a tendency to focus on the wrong metrics, on too many of them, or on drilling down to such detail that one misses a fundamental change to the external environment.

Business Intelligence and Analytics are at the core of the Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud design, enabling key insights to project information for effective business decision making. Analytics appearing within role-based dashboards provide team members with the ability to identify, isolate and resolve key project issues. This way, project-driven organizations can gain unprecedented insight into its project based business.

Empowering a worker requires a blending of business intelligence information with the transactional applications wherever possible. This is because more and more, transactional applications need to be exception-based, and go beyond process automation.

As a result, project team members require information they need to solve problems and make the right decisions on the spot. So Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud's embedded business intelligence provides analytic information in the context of a person's daily work and always in the context of the transaction on which he or she is working, to help the users predict outcomes, make the right decisions and take appropriate action.

Oracle's Cloud applications are differentiated by the use of pervasive analytics. Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud delivers relevant embedded analytics at all steps in a business process. This level of decision support, combined with intuitive, visualized and easy-to-understand data, ensures integrity, credibility, and lowers the administrative burden for project delivery.

Figure 2 - Actionable Insight into Project Performance, Health and Trends
The figure above showcases the Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud performance dashboard. Note the wealth of easily digestible information, the visual appeal, as well as a quick view into details without a drilldown.

With better visibility and task relevant analysis, project teams are better equipped to execute against a plan, make informed course corrections, and drive to project completion.

Role Based Dashboards and the Search for Information

The survey results are sobering:

- According to a LexisNexis survey, "while an average workday for white-collar workers is 8.89 hours, the survey finds that on average, 7.89 working hours are used conducting research, attending meetings, and searching for previously created documents."

- Conservative estimates by International Data Corporation (IDC) suggest that an organization with 1,000 employees wastes at least $2.5 million per year due to the information overload dilemma such as failing to find existing information, searching for outdated information or recreating information that is outdated and poorly designed. The opportunity costs are even greater, exceeding $15M annually.

- Harvard Business Review has found that an average worker spends 40% of the work day processing information which translates into only 60% of the average work day being spent on true value creation activities. 40% of the payroll costs are spent handling the overload.

Unfortunately, legacy project management systems allow for the input of data without the benefit of analyzed actionable intelligence for key stakeholders. Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud delivers a revolutionary approach utilizing a multidimensional model at the heart of the solution, providing users with

- An operational dashboard with insight into the health of a set of projects
- Trends for project key performance indicators for focus on projects with escalating issues
- Actionable intelligence allowing users to take immediate corrective action on live transactions

Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud delivers near real-time business intelligence, with powerful multi-dimensional analysis capabilities. Integration with Oracle Essbase makes this possible. This provides for a scalable project reporting platform that enables powerful project reporting and analysis functions on top of the architecture.

Additional benefits include not only current Key Performance Indicators, but historical KPIs too. This means that project stakeholders not only see how the project is performing today, but how it has performed over time, letting them broaden their focus to address potential issues at a more strategic level.
The Enterprise Project Perspective

Project management maturity within an organization is predicated on the skillset of an organization’s project managers. Indeed, most organizations would be classified in the lower end of a maturity scale, primarily because the “accidental” project manager tends to proliferate. This role is characterized by individuals who have been thrust into delivering significant or critical corporate projects without any, or limited, training in the art of executing and delivering a project. Conversely, project driven organizations also house extremely strong project managers – those with PMP certifications, extensive training, and expertise to handle the most complex initiatives.

It is the organization’s responsibility to ensure that the work product for both types of individuals is accounted for, and tracked, at an enterprise level. To this end, the organization must provide a choice for the project manager – one that reflects the individual’s skill level and ability, yet balances the need for project delivery standards and corporate-wide integrated project visibility.

Organizations also have two very different constituents viewing a project, through their own lenses. These are the finance professionals and the project delivery organization. Again, the enterprise PPM tool of choice should afford the relevant individual work in the environment that they are most comfortable in, without compromising the project data.

To this end, Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud delivers a set of project and resource management tools to arm project managers, resource managers and team members with agile and powerful solutions to accelerate the project planning and delivery phases.

Simplified and collaborative project management solutions extend planning and scheduling to the “occasional” project manager; to those who manage projects infrequently and not as their primary role. Not all planning and scheduling solutions have kept up with this evolution, but Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud has been designed from the ground up to address the needs of all project managers, regardless of their level of experience, and can be adopted by all organizations for any type of project work.

Team members can work collaboratively with the project manager to develop the plan, identifying new work for themselves or for others, or provide refined work estimates which the project manager can incorporate, for an up-to-the-minute plan. In this way, project management is now extended to team members; to the people who do most of the work on the project and yet whose project needs have generally been overlooked.
In summary, Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud is designed to ensure that project team members and related stakeholders benefit from a single integrated PPM system, yet are able to accomplish their tasks to the best of their ability.

Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud also allows for native integration with both Microsoft Project™ - for those more familiar with the desktop product – as well as Oracle’s Primavera P6 v8 project scheduling tool – for the professional project manager and those more comfortable with developing complex, rigorous plans.

Modern, Mobile Project Execution Tools

Lastly, modern project tools for the 21st century need to be infused with innovative mobile capabilities to help the project team stay on top of business anytime, anywhere.

Oracle Project Portfolio Management Cloud addresses the needs of project managers on the go, by offering them a fresh new approach to project visualization, designed expressly to embrace the simplicity of the tablet experience and to avoid the visual clutter associated with traditional project plan views. Using a modern take on a project view, tasks are arranged in logical streams which indicate the sequence of work, and dependencies are only revealed where necessary. In a clean, simple and intuitive interface, project managers can use native gestures swipe across the phases of a project, zoom into the task hierarchy to reveal further project detail, or switch to an intuitive view of the latest progress.
In addition to the project managers, mobile capabilities must also be extended to team members; to the people who do most of the work on the project and yet whose project needs have generally been overlooked. So when the team needs anytime, anywhere access, they use the simple and intuitive mobile task management application to best utilize the time between meetings or waiting for the subway: Seeing what tasks they need to work on, progressing and making updates to their tasks, and adding new work.

Figure 4 - View Project Status Anytime, Anywhere
Conclusion

As the role of the project team and the requirements needed to successfully execute an enterprise project change, so too must the tools available to deliver projects. Oracle’s Project Portfolio Management suite of applications combines the strength of modern, social and intuitive project execution management solutions with global enterprise-grade project financial applications, to deliver an end-to-end enterprise PPM solution, all paired with the simplicity of the cloud, with its focus on ease of use and a fast implementation time.