

Achieve Successful Business Outcomes with Program Management



Why are there so many things that come in “Ps,” like Peter Piper or another childhood classic, “mind your Ps and Qs”? And then there are the seven Ps: Prior Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance (well that’s only six, but you know the seventh). Lately, I’ve been thinking about another set of Ps: problem, project, and program management.

Support services often prides itself on dealing with problems before they happen, being proactive, preventative, and even predictive. And installations, implementations, migrations, and upgrades are often managed as individual projects by individual project managers. Both of these disciplines have their places. But one of the most important “Ps” is program management.

Program management often addresses both problem and project management as components of a larger program. It also encompasses aspects of the entire business that go well beyond both disciplines. Being involved with professional services and customer experience efforts here at Pure, I often see that program management drives outcomes that create positive experiences for our partners and customers. And all too often, the most key “P”—program management—is not recognized for its contribution to those outcomes.

Program Management and Project Success

So, what is program management, and how does it contribute to accomplishing business goals in ways that problem and project management cannot? Large IT programs, such as upgrades, security enhancements, or transformations, are complex. The goals are usually wide in scale and the projects involve many teams and phases that may take place over several years.

Successful program management addresses these complexities by focusing on these three areas:

- **A holistic approach:** This approach involves working across the organization and including all the necessary stakeholders, such as IT, finance, data services, and executive management. It focuses on the contributions and tasks of each and develops metrics to show that everyone is working toward the overall goals of the project.
- **Dependencies:** Program managers often schedule multiple projects that are happening simultaneously. These projects often have dependencies on each other. Program managers work across the organization and projects to identify the dependencies and head off any conflicts. They also look at the business goals and often target the key dependencies and/or largest costs first.
- **Relationships:** In looking across the organization, program management establishes trust that all of the teams will have a voice in the execution and outcome of the program. Because they're involved in many projects, program managers have the opportunity to build relationships which can help them break down silos and deal with dependencies that can lead to delays.

This holistic program management approach has shown that it can deliver the required outcomes for the project, as well as a positive experience for the teams involved. Pure's program managers have extensive experience driving large complex programs to positive end results that deliver on business goals for our customers.

For example, a major financial institution engaged Pure Professional Services program managers to implement [Pure Evergreen//One™](#) in a large, complex IT environment. They took a strategic approach to the migration, starting with arrays that took up the most space and caused the most maintenance issues to help the bank achieve immediate benefits and successfully complete the project.

Let's go a little deeper. What does program management deliver that helps all of the teams involved in a large or transformative effort? It includes:

- **An assessment of the IT environment in the context of the goals for the project:** Often, there are wide-scale goals for a data services upgrade or transformation. Yet, the implementation is treated as a limited, defined-scope project, where new data systems are installed and turned up. But an initial objective assessment of the ability of the project to achieve the goals often identifies the need for a program with a wider scope, involving business, data services, and organizational stakeholders to achieve these goals.
- **An architectural design:** This is a critical part of any IT and data services upgrade. Simply upgrading the existing architecture with newer versions of the same systems can miss opportunities for consolidation, automation, and application improvements. Similar to the assessment, a thorough architectural design will identify dependencies and potential problems early in the process and build in mitigation operations.
- **Accountability:** A project management approach often diffuses accountability across various projects. Individual project goals are stated in narrow technical terms and are achieved based on

completion of a specified activity. But did the projects achieve the overall business goals? Program management allows for a wider scale of accountability to the end business goals whether they're cost savings, new services, or transformation.

Program management knits together the various projects, dependencies, teams, and goals to deliver outcomes for an organization.

The main objection to program management is the notion that a wider scope is unnecessary and may add time, cost, and complexity. It flies in the face of a "just get 'er done" approach. That may be true in some limited cases, but the IT reality of today is that complexity and overlapping requirements often make any data service upgrades more involved than originally envisioned. Program managers work within that complexity to deliver overall business goals.

At Pure, our Professional Services team includes program managers who use proven processes to deliver on business goals for our partners and customers. They're involved early, guide and lead teams throughout the engagement, and are key to delivering a great customer experience. [Ask us](#) about how program management can help make your next big IT initiative a success.