

Project Management

Information Facilitates Decision Making

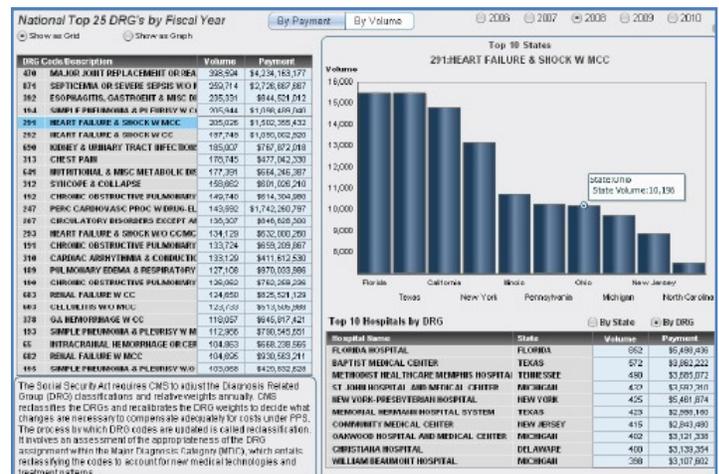
Better control over an organization's project management environment helps ease leadership's concerns about initiatives being completed on time, within budget, and in line with organizational goals and objectives. These and other business drivers produce the need for tools that enable greater transparency and increased efficiency while allowing organizations to better measure, control, and manage initiatives.

Enterprise wide support, implementation, and consistent use of standards is fundamental to effectively completing project initiatives on time, budget, and within scope. Such standards also lay the foundation upon which measurement, tracking, and trending of initiative's information can begin. Once in established, effective and consistent communication of progress against plans can begin to feed into decision making. From such information organizations can then begin to leverage tools that help identify issues, risks, constraints, and track progress.

Portfolio reporting and management assists with the prioritization and effective utilization of limited organizational resources. However, for such efforts to be successful requires significant enterprise-wide investment in practice, process, and tools necessary to support them. The CDC Unified Process makes available a library of documents that provide guidance about key management practices and processes that have been outlined by key stakeholders from across CDC. These Practices Guides and Process Guides are brief documents that communicate many key management practices and regulatory requirements that CDC initiatives must comply with. In addition, standardized templates are also available to facilitate uniformed and consistent presentation of project information.

Organizations need quick access to business data in a format conducive to making correct decisions, manage performance, and drive results. Application

of best practices in conjunction with regularly delivered reports against progress and status can be leveraged to drive development and delivery or aggregated reporting to decision makers. One such tool may be an executive dashboard.



A dashboard provides a quick summary of organizational initiatives, important activities, and relevant business data vital to decision makers. Dashboards enable the management team to easily identify trends and issues and take appropriate actions when needed.

Developing a dashboard appropriate for decision makers is a collaborative process between those providing the information, developing the dashboard views, and the stakeholder audience. It's important to note that in some instances it may not be responsible to capture certain measures and metrics that for the most part may only be "nice-to-have". In such instances it's important to balance the benefit(s) gained from capturing such information, the audience it's being presented to, and the effort necessary to do so.



Heavy consideration should be given to identifying what are meaningful measures and metrics appropriate to present in such a matter. Success in this endeavor involves selecting the right metrics to capture, display, how to display them, and how often such measures should be reviewed and/or revised. Special attention should be paid to how a particular measure is displayed. Not all graphical representations communicate the same message.

Just as important are what metrics are being measured and how such measurements are captured. Metrics and measures should support accountability. They should be simple and sufficiently relevant to stakeholders and should enable transparency into project delivery and status.

Project measures can fall into two categories, those that are specific to an effort and those that are general for all project management activities. Specific measures are often related to the result of the project and can include items such as customer satisfactions, specific results or process efficiencies. Project metrics may include items such as earned value management, cost, schedule or scope performance, risk count or better yet, an imputed value based on count and impact, just to name a few. Also note, trending values is usually more valuable than just point in time data views.

Using tools in conjunction with rigorous standards helps move initiatives from business need, through development, to implementation, and eventually disposition while reducing associated costs.

Ultimately payback from investment in such tools occurs through results garnered from more informed decisions made as a result of better information. The effect of such information should accelerate benefits from the organization's project portfolio. The resulting efficiencies improve resource utilization and capital expenditures which in turn unlocks opportunities not previously possible.

For more information and tools related to project management, the HHS Enterprise Performance Life Cycle, the CDC Unified Process, or the Project Management Community of Practice please visit the CDC UP website at <http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup/>. ■

Project Management Community of Practice

- **June 24, 2011**
A Conversation with CDC's COO
- **July 29, 2011**
Understanding Section 508
- **August 26, 2011**
Leadership
- **September 30, 2011**
Dig Deeper into Microsoft Project
- **October 28, 2011**
Information Security 101 for Project Managers
- **December 02, 2011**
Enterprise Architecture

For more information on the Project Management Community of Practice visit the PMCoP website at <http://www2.cdc.gov/cdcup/library/pmcp/> ■

CDC Unified Process Presentations

The CDC UP offers a short overview presentation to any CDC FTE or Non-FTE group. Presentations are often performed at your facility, on a day of the week convenient for your group, and typically take place over lunch structured as one hour lunch-and-learn style meeting.

Contact the CDC Unified Process at cdcup@cdc.gov or visit <http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup> to arrange a short overview presentation for your group. ■

Contact the CDC Unified Process

The CDC Unified Process Project Management Newsletter is authored by Daniel Vitek, MBA, PMP and published by the Office of Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services.

For questions about the CDC UP, comments regarding this newsletter, suggestions for future newsletter topics, or to **subscribe to the CDC UP Project Management Newsletter** please contact the CDC UP at cdcup@cdc.gov

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup/>

