

The benefit of a PMO in cross-border service delivery

Working across borders is a fact of life for many companies these days. They have seized the opportunity to open up new markets and potentially lower their cost base.

Advances in technology allow enterprises to operate from diverse locations, and in the construction sector the ability to deliver projects to the client's established standards in other countries or even continents is very important.

In order to operate across borders and service clients successfully in a variety of global locations, clients are increasingly requiring the function of a project management office (PMO) within their regional headquarters.

From our experience, this function needs to be supported at two levels. At a strategic and planning level, the PMO must have executive presence within each client organisation: firstly to align with business vision and strategic goals, and secondly to hold a senior position within the management structure, providing authority to deliver on the agreed strategy. Once this is established, the delivery solution needs to demonstrate added value to a separable team approach in each location.

Not everything can be done remotely, however. Expertise is also needed 'on the ground'. There has to be a thorough understanding of local business practices and social nuances in order to be successful.

At the implementation and execution level, our clients expect cross-border consistency. It is important, therefore, that resources with appropriate local knowledge and sector expertise are allocated in each location, and that a bespoke toolkit of management controls and process is adopted to provide consistency across regions while still allowing flexibility around regional constraints.

It's important for the process to remain fluid, with regular auditing of the project and continuous improvement being held to take account of dynamic project progression and evolving customer need. This allows the client to focus on their core business and to deliver on their message. It also ensures that we are carrying out the due diligence necessary to make sure that we live up to commitments and meet expectations.

This makes complex international projects as smooth, efficient and cost effective as possible. And this means that, from one continent to another, everyone ends up as a winner.

