Enterprise PLM programs are complex undertakings that require strong program management disciplines to control. Sometimes my advice to go fast and be “agile-like” in development is interpreted as not requiring the overhead of program management. On the contrary, strong program management enables both speed and simplicity.

The rule of thumb is that you should be spending approximately fifteen percent of your PLM budget on program management. In large, global environments that will be money well spent. Fundamental capabilities like work plan, resource and budget management must be robust. Scope management is the most important discipline, especially within an implementation cycle when you are fighting the desire to “enhance” the solution. Program risk management and proactive mitigation is a critical capability.

Consider the activity coordination that is required across the functions of a program: process design, software solution development, IT infrastructure and environment management, data clean-up and migration, user preparation and training, business case management, organizational change management, and governance and executive alignment activities. And this is all before we get to parallel global implementation tracks and overlapping development streams.

As the scope of PLM software capability has grown so has the need to coordinate and integrate with a more diverse set of impacted business functions. These programs are no longer confined to the engineering group. PLM almost always impacts marketing, quality, supply chain, regulatory, and aftermarket service. This compounds the complexity and increases the need for program management.

Successful programs invest in advanced program management and avoid the “surprises” that come from not anticipating obvious challenges and roadblocks.

More Reading

- PLM Power - Critical Success Factors
- PLM Power #1 - Solution Simplicity
- PLM Power #2 – Speed of Execution
- PLM Power #3 – Program Management
- PLM Power #4 – Business Sponsorship
- PLM Power #5 – Engaged Governance
- PLM Power #6 – Value Orientation
- PLM Power #7 – Transformation Leadership
About the Author

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For the past 30 years, Bill has helped executives in technology-driven industries transform their competencies to deliver results. He is a highly regarded consultant, speaker, and writer on the topics of innovation strategy, product development, portfolio management, technology commercialization, and the software systems that enable innovation. Keep up with Bill’s latest research and thoughts on innovation and the rising role of the Chief Innovation Officer at www.TheChiefInnovationOfficer.com.