We depend on project managers to help deliver sustainable results from portfolio & pipeline management (P&PM) initiatives. What do you need to do and say to get their buy-in? How can you explain “what’s in it for them?” These are just a couple of the questions that cause me a great deal of agony. While I can come up with some standard consulting responses like “efficiency gains” or “better understanding of key priorities in the organization,” these fuzzy benefits are generally not enough to justify the change we’re asking of project managers.

In order to provide leadership with information to make good decisions and chart the course of the ship, the perceived work load for management and supporting functions typically increases with the implementation of P&PM process and tools. We can work to ensure we don’t overcomplicate design or implement process for the sake of process, but we are asking project managers to stick to some sort of reporting standards on a regular cadence, and follow templates and guidelines to get work done correctly and more efficiently. Not exactly sexy stuff for project managers when what they really want to be doing is ideating and launching great new products and services.

Rather than bang our heads against the wall trying to create a benefit case for a group we depend on to deliver sustainable results, why don’t we use the process itself to reward behaviors that are important for the greater good? Innovation is fun! New! Exciting! Whiz! Bang! People don’t like to be held accountable when it doesn’t work. But if we use the information collected to incentivize or recognize people for delivering results or for proactively recommending kill decisions when the writing is on the wall, we show them we trust their ability to support the greater good – and that in itself is motivating!

Don’t underestimate the fact that everyone in an organization will take great pride in their contributions to support results delivery. P&PM can contribute significant value by ensuring we make smart decisions, stay on track to meet business plans and objectives, and continuously improve when we don’t meet goals. Careful, honest communication around these contributions is extremely important for project managers, and will help drive long-term success of your P&PM initiative.
About the Author

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Pamela enjoys international travel, designer fashion, and hopes to one day hit #1 on The New York Times Bestseller list.