

Transforming project management practices

How the Customs Service reorganised project management for real results

Problem	<p>Disparate practices and no common project management framework</p> <p>Customs was struggling with disparate project management practices: there was no common framework, inefficiencies and mistakes were common and cross-project dependencies were almost impossible to manage. Oakton was brought in to help implement a redesign of Custom's project management practices as part of an overall transformation program to improve the standard and quality of services to the government and to clients.</p>
Approach	<p>Begin with a robust and unified framework</p> <p>Oakton assessed over 60 critical projects, identifying the 20 most strategically important projects and their interdependencies to develop Project Manager Framework and Competency Pathway, aligned to the existing Customs competency development approach.</p>
Recommendations	<p>The right framework to deliver a unified solution</p> <p>Oakton first recommended the establishment of a Corporate Project Office (CPO) to oversee major change. Second, the Project Manager Competency Pathway determined the required levels of competencies necessary, and third, the formation and building of project management resources in Customs with appropriate qualifications and experience to importantly manage a range of projects of differing size and complexity. Key elements included the development, implementation and communication of a common and consistent methodology within the whole of Customs that reflects industry better practice; the creation of a community of project management professionals within Customs; and a more robust and much improved governance structure for all projects.</p>
Results	<p>Project management skills, governance and reporting significantly improved</p> <p>A common and consistent methodology supported by a community of project management professionals is now operational nationwide. Governance on all projects has been significantly improved and independent management reporting provides visibility across strategic projects for the first time. Efficiency gains achieved were immediate and long-lasting.</p>

The Australian Customs Service is a national agency briefed with managing the security and integrity of our nation's borders and employs 5,000 people.

We're an Australian consulting and technology firm founded in 1988. Our business is helping create lasting value by uniquely blending business insights and technology solutions to give our clients a significant advantage in today's rapidly changing world.

At Oakton, we think differently: instead of jumping in we step back and invest time and effort to improve our understanding of the problem you're trying to solve. We focus on examining the problem from different perspectives to master what we believe is the most important step, clearly defining the problem in the first place!

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