OnePlan

From reporting to relevance: Mario Trentim on the future of PMOs and AI

Why PMOs must focus on business value, simpler governance, and the practical application of artificial intelligence.

AT A GLANCE

Interviewee:
Mario Trentim
Strategy Execution Advisor and Board Member

Key takeaways

- Legitimacy, not sophistication, defines PMO success
- Centralize resource and financial information
- Fit frameworks to the organization
- Aim AI at execution, monitoring, and control

PMOs face a persistent challenge: demonstrating value to executive leadership. We spoke with Mario Trentim, Strategy Execution Advisor and Board Member, about what makes PMOs successful and where AI can have the greatest impact.

01 Despite decades of investment in PMO frameworks, why do some organizations still struggle to recognize their value?

Mario Trentim: Executive leadership often does not fully understand what the PMO contributes. Leaders are focused on operations, business performance, and delivering results.

Research into PMO success highlights an important concept: legitimacy. A PMO succeeds when stakeholders believe it delivers what the organization needs.

A PMO can implement sophisticated methodologies and still be unsuccessful if leadership does not recognize their value. Conversely, a simpler PMO that addresses important business needs can be highly successful.

“Ultimately, PMO success depends on stakeholder expectations, not methodological sophistication.”

02 What capabilities should PMOs prioritize to become more valuable to the organization?

Mario Trentim: One of the greatest opportunities is creating a central place for resource and financial information.

Organizations typically find ways to execute their projects, even with imperfect processes. The challenge comes when consolidating project information, understanding resource commitments, reconciling budgets against actual costs, and producing reliable portfolio reports.

Information is often distributed across spreadsheets, Microsoft Project, Jira, financial systems, and other applications.

A PMO that connects this information and makes it useful for management decisions delivers significant value without necessarily introducing additional complexity.

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03 Should PMOs continue pursuing increasingly sophisticated methodologies and technology implementations?

Mario Trentim: Different organizations require different approaches. Engineering and industrial companies often need detailed governance, stage gates, and specialized processes. Technology, banking, and professional services organizations may benefit from more flexible frameworks.

For many organizations, proven practices delivered through solutions requiring limited customization can produce value quickly.

The objective should be practical improvement, with frameworks and technology adapted to the organization's needs and capabilities.

04 AI is demonstrating productivity benefits across business functions. Why has its impact on project management been more limited?

Mario Trentim: AI works particularly well when activities are repeatable and sufficient historical information is available.

Consulting organizations, for example, can use previous implementations, proposals, and project plans to generate new deliverables.

However, many projects are unique. Complex engineering programs, specialized construction, and innovative product development often lack comparable historical data.AI-generated plans and requirements may consequently require extensive human review.

Generating documents is also only a small part of project management. The greater opportunity lies in the work performed throughout execution.

05 Where should PMOs focus their AI investments to achieve the greatest impact?

Mario Trentim: Project execution, monitoring, and control offer enormous potential.

Consider a major engineering program involving thousands of workers, hundreds of vendors, and years of execution. Every day brings schedule changes, resource constraints, supplier updates, and financial adjustments. Project managers spend significant time collecting information, updating systems, reconciling changes, and preparing reports.

AI could automate much of this coordination and monitoring. Combined with integrated project information, it could identify exceptions, surface risks, and enable managers to interact directly with portfolio data.

The greatest opportunity is making project execution more effective, rather than simply generating more project documentation.

CONCLUSION

The PMO, more than ever, is a decision-making partner

Mario's perspective highlights three priorities for the next generation of PMOs:

Establish executive relevance Demonstrate value through stakeholder outcomes rather than governance complexity.	**Simplify and connect** Integrate project, resource, and financial information while accommodating different methodologies.	**Apply AI where work happens** Prioritize monitoring, exception management, and decision support.

These priorities are shaping expectations for modern Strategic Portfolio Management platforms. OnePlan supports this direction by connecting project execution, portfolio governance, resource planning, financial management, and AI-assisted insights.

The next generation of PMOs will be distinguished less by the reports they produce and more by their ability to turn information into better business decisions.

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