## Process: Program Office - 06 Deep Dive Review Process

**Process Owner:** Bill Hoberecht, billh@pinnacleprojects.com

### Description and Use of this Process:
This is a trio of processes for planning and conducting a thorough review of a project’s Project Management elements. Project value, commitments, the plan and project progress are all covered during a full Deep Dive Review. An interactive review can be significantly more effective than one-way published status reporting as a means of conveying project status and needed actions.

### Entry Criteria/Inputs:
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### Exit Criteria/Outputs:
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### Key Roles:
- **Program Controller:** responsible for planning, initiating and conducting Deep Dive Reviews.
- **Project Manager:** responsible for preparing and presenting Deep Dive Review information. Also responsible for documenting and tracking all identified action items resulting from the review.
- **Program Manager, Program Finance Manager, Program Resource Manager, Program Quality Assurance Manager, Program Supplier Performance Manager:** participants in the review meeting.
- **Program Director/Project Executive:** optional participant in the review meeting.

### Assets/References:
- **Introduction to Deep Dive Reviews.** This overview provides a high level description of Deep Dive Reviews that is useful in briefing executives, managers and the PMO on the highlights of Deep Dive Reviews.
- **Training on the Presentation Template.** This 40 minute training course on Deep Dive Reviews instructs the Project Manager on preparation of the presentation materials, and helps the project executive/manager and the PMO understand the topics that should be presented and discussed during a Deep Dive Review meeting.
- **The Deep Dive Review Process.** This process description for the Deep Dive Review can jump-start your implementation of Deep Dive Reviews, and provides further details on the steps to follow.
- **Presentation Template.** This MS-Project presentation template provides all of the slides to be populated by the Project Manager and presented at the Deep Dive Review meeting - extensive notes for most slides provide a reminder of the instructions provided during the training course on Deep Dive Reviews.
- **A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge** (specifically, the information on the *Project Integration Management* knowledge area; Section 4.6 covers *Monitor and Control Project Work.*) Available from the Project Management Institute at [www.pmi.org](http://www.pmi.org)
- **The Pinnacle Performance Project Status Reporting** template for use by all Project Managers in reporting status to the Program Controller.
- **The Pinnacle Performance Architecture - 1 Architecture Reviews - Process Description** has a page or two of helpful guidance (mostly on human touch/soft skills) to projects undergoing a review as well as to other participants.

### Measures:
- **Process Metrics:**
  - Total Preparation Effort for all parties (in staff hours)
  - Total Effort (in staff hours) in review meeting(s)/duration of review meeting(s)
• Project Quality Metrics:
  • Total Count of New Issues Discovered, for each severity level

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1. Overview

Deep Dive Reviews conducted by a Program Management Office are a means of sharing project accomplishments, raising concerns about a project, providing a focused attention on project complexities and dependencies, and, most importantly, identifying additional actions that should be taken to ensure project success.

Deep Dive Reviews are a standard activity for a Program. A Deep Dive review is generally initiated under two similar circumstances:

- The Program Management Office conducts periodic planning to identify projects that will present a Deep Dive Review. When a project is invited (summoned?) to present at a Deep Dive Review, this is not a vote of ‘no confidence’ or a penalty for the project. Rather, every high profile or higher risk should assume that, in the normal course of program operations, they will participate in a Deep Dive Review.

- An Executive with project responsibilities conducts regularly schedule Deep Dive Reviews, visiting each project twice per year. These reviews are scheduled and facilitated by the Program Management Office. Participants include the presenter, the Executive, and selected members of the PMO.

Deep Dive Reviews are not a high volume activity. The Program, as a whole, might plan a maximum of two Deep Dive Reviews per calendar quarter. Low risk/low profile projects on the program may never participate in a Deep Dive Review, while a high risk/high profile project may have one (or possibly two) Deep Dive Reviews in a 12 month period.

- An Executive with project responsibilities conducts regularly schedule Deep Dive Reviews, visiting each project twice per year. These reviews are scheduled and facilitated by the Program Management Office. Participants include the presenter, the Executive, and selected members of the PMO.

An alternative review format is the Project Issues Review, which is devoted to examining Project Issues (which are expected to be documented on a Project Issues/Action Items Register). The intent is to ensure that action is being taken by the Project Team, Program Management Office, and other parties (stakeholders, programs, projects or organizations upon which there is a dependency) to enable project success.
The Program Office Deep Dive Review Process includes three work flows that are loosely coupled with one another:

1. **Review Planning.** The primary output of this process is scheduled reviews to be conducted over the upcoming three month calendar quarter.

2. **Conduct a Deep Dive Review.** The primary outputs of this process are a Deep Dive Review PowerPoint presentation, a record of significant decisions (published in the next Project Status Report) and an action item log that is generated during the review meeting.

3. **Conduct Project Issues Review.** This is an alternate to the Deep Dive Review, and is a review that focuses entirely on understanding actions needed to resolve issues identified in the Project Issues/Action Items Register.
2. **Review Planning**

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this process is to identify each project that will participate in a Deep Dive Review over the next calendar quarter.

2. **Frequency of Executing this Process:** Planning is completed every three or six months.

3. **Process Steps:** These steps are executed by the Program Controller working with the Program Manager.
   a. **Identify the Universe of Projects.** List all projects that are within the Program. It is from this set of projects that selections will be made for Deep Dive and Project Issue reviews.
   b. **Finalize Selection Criteria.** Document the selection criteria used for this planning session (this will likely be an update from the criteria used in the previous planning activities). This criteria should include consideration of:
      i. **Project Risk.** The overall qualitative risk assessment of the project (e.g., the risk to a project's success, measured as High, Medium or Low). Ideally, this risk assessment is provided within the standard project status materials provided regularly to the Program Management Office.
      ii. **Project Phase.** Avoid conducting Deep Dive Reviews for projects that are just getting started (there may not be enough information available to review) and for projects that are nearing their delivery date (the team is likely focused on tactical project issues and the time taken for additional Program interaction will probably not be beneficial).
      iii. **Last Review Date.** When was a Deep Dive Review most recently conducted for each project. The intent here is to avoid having reviews too frequently for each project.
      iv. **Visiting Each Project.** The Project Executive will conduct a Deep Dive Review with each project on a regular basis – the selection criteria must ensure that this requirement is satisfied.
   c. **Plan the Review Schedule.** Determine how many reviews to conduct. For PMO Deep Dive Reviews, this should be no more than once per month – two reviews every three months is recommended. For Project Executive Deep Dive Reviews, it is possible that there may be multiple reviews per month.
   d. **Finalize Selection of Projects.** Based upon the Selection Criteria and Review Schedule, select the projects to participate in Deep Dive Reviews during the coming three/six months. Identify one additional project as an alternate if a selected project is unable to participate during this three month period.
   e. **Finalize Review Type.** For each project, the Program Controller specifies the type of review to conduct:
      i. **Deep Dive Review.** This is more comprehensive and provides an opportunity for the Program leadership and stakeholders to become more familiar with the project and their role in supporting the project. It also is an accountability mechanism for encouraging the Project Manager to have a well-managed project.
      ii. **Project Issues Review.** This review is most appropriate for issue-rich (e.g., troubled) projects where a tactical focus on resolving immediate issues is the best way to support a project. This review can be beneficial in helping a project resolve difficult issues which require assistance from other stakeholders, projects, programs or organizations. Recognize that this review naturally focuses on...
problems and as such does not afford the Project Manager the opportunity to present a balanced view of the project status – participants can leave with a unfairly negative view of the project.

f. **Establish the Review Meeting Attendee List.** For each review, the Project Manager and other key project members (identified by the Project Manager) will attend. The Program Management Office will attend. The Program Controller works with each Project Manager to identify individuals from other functional areas or other related projects that should be invited to attend.

g. **Training the Project Managers.** Ensure that the Project Managers (who will be preparing and presenting) are trained in the process of Deep Dive reviews and are sufficiently knowledgeable with the presentation template.

h. **Publish the Deep Dive Review Schedule & Distribute Materials.** Early notification to project teams and other participants can help ensure proper attendance and preparation.

   i. Inform each project manager of their project’s participation in a Deep Dive Review. Provide these materials:

      1. A copy of the Deep Dive Review Process description (i.e., this document).
      2. The Deep Dive Review PowerPoint template for presentation at the review meeting.

   ii. For each review during this three/six month period, create a calendaring entry (e.g., a Outlook Calendar meeting proposal) for each participant.

4. **Exit Criteria:** A review calendar has been established for this three month period, and all reviews are scheduled.
3. **Conduct a Deep Dive Review**

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this process is to prepare for and conduct a Deep Dive Review (and, of course, the purpose of that review is to assist the project in successfully completed as committed).

2. **Frequency of Executing this Process:** This activity is conducted once for each scheduled Deep Dive Review.

3. **Process Steps:** These steps are managed by the Program Controller, and most steps are executed by the Project Manager and Project Team members. Execution of these steps is started when the Deep Dive Review meeting has been scheduled (via the **Review Planning** process)
   
   a. **Assemble Current Project Status Materials.** The Project Manager locate and collects information about the current project state. The materials include:
      
      i. the baseline of formal project commitments
      ii. the published project plan (including the schedule)
      iii. the published project architecture
      iv. the most recently published project status report
      v. the most recently issued project issues/action items register
      vi. the most recently issued project risks register
      vii. the most recently issued supplier performance management report
   
   If more recent status information is needed, the project manager meets with project team members and other project stakeholders to collect this data.

   b. **Prepare the Deep Dive Review PowerPoint presentation.** Using the assembled project status information, the Project Manager creates the review presentation. If there are controversial issues or a lack of clarity in some areas, the Project Manager may elect to meet with Project Team Members to review and update the presentation.

   c. **(Optional) Distribute review materials in advance.** We’ve found that few reviewers allocate time to examine review materials prior to attending review meetings. If the organizational culture encourages (or requires) advance preparation, then distribute the materials a few days ahead of time. If it is very unlikely that this advance distribution will be used, then take those few days to finalize the materials and distribute them during the review meeting itself.

   d. **Conduct the review meeting.** The duration of a Deep Dive Review meeting is heavily dependent upon the size, complexity, volume of issues, and overall project state. A simple project with no significant issues may be able to adequately cover the materials in 90 minutes. A typical project may warrant three hours in the review meeting. A review for an extremely large, complex, issue-ridden project may exceed eight hours. The review meeting itself has a simple format:
      
      i. **Introducing the Review Meeting,** to ensure that all participants understand the meeting’s agenda, objectives, and format.
      ii. **Introductions,** including a short statement from each person on why they are present and how they expect to be participating.
      iii. **Presentation** by the Project Manager (with assistance, where appropriate, by other Project Team Members) of the Deep Dive Review materials. Allow for questions and productive discussion on each slide. A scribe from the Project Team records action items identified during the presentation and discussion.
      iv. **Revisit Overall the Project Prognosis.** The Project Manager summarizes the prognosis for project success taking into account current project status, the
severity/impact of issues facing the project and any concerns raised during the review. The purpose of this action is to be certain that the Project Manager, as well as review attendees, are clear in their understanding of the project status and the actions needed to ensure project success.

v. Recap action items. The Project Manager summarizes action items (or action item updates) raised during the meeting. These items are recording on the project’s standard action item register. The Project Manager validates with the Review Meeting Attendees that the exit criteria has been satisfied.

vi. Metrics Collection. The Program Controller surveys each attendee to collect the metrics identified in the Process Prologue on Page i of this process document.

e. Publish Review Results. The Project Manager publishes significant decisions (made during the review), the revised project issues/action item register, and the project prognosis in the next written Project Status report.

4. Exit Criteria: This process is completed when the review meeting has concluded and all significant action items are published in the project’s standard Project Issues/Action Items Register.
4. **Conduct a Project Issues Review**

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this process is to prepare for and conduct review of Project Issues (and the purpose of that review is to assist the project resolving issues blocking project success). This review is tactical in nature, and focuses entirely on issues & issue resolution.

2. **Frequency of Executing this Process:** This activity is conducted once for each scheduled Project Issues Review.

3. **Process Steps:** These steps are managed by the Program Controller, and most steps are executed by the Project Manager and Project Team members. Execution of these steps is started when the Project Issues Review meeting has been scheduled (via the **Review Planning** process)

   a. **Assemble Current Project Status Materials.** The Project Manager locate and collects information about the current project state. These materials are for reference by the Project Manager during the Project Issues Review meeting. The materials include:
      i. the baseline of formal project commitments
      ii. the published project plan (including the schedule)
      iii. the published project architecture
      iv. the most recently published project status report
      v. the most recently issued project issues/action items register
      vi. the most recently issued project risks register
      vii. the most recently issued supplier performance management report

      If more recent status information is needed, the project manager meets with project team members and other project stakeholders to collect this data.

   b. **Revise the Project Issues/Action Item Register.** The Project Manager reviews this register to ensure that it is current, making updates if necessary. The intent is to have the review using current information.

   c. **(Optional) Distribute review materials in advance.** We’ve found that few reviewers allocate time to examine review materials prior to attending review meetings. If the organizational culture encourages (or requires) advance preparation, then distribute the materials a few days ahead of time. If it is very unlikely that this advance distribution will be used, then take those few days to finalize the materials and distribute them during the review meeting itself.

   d. **Conduct the review meeting.** The duration of a Project Issues Review meeting is heavily dependent upon the size, complexity, volume of issues, and overall project state. A simple project with no significant issues may be able to adequately cover the materials in 15 minutes. A typical project may warrant one to two hours in the review meeting. A review for a extremely large, complex, issue-ridden project may exceed four hours. The review meeting itself has a simple format:
      i. **Introducing the Review Meeting**, to ensure that all participants understand the meeting’s agenda, objectives, and format.
      ii. **Introductions**, including a short statement from each person on why they are present and how they expect to be participating.
      iii. **Presentation** by the Project Manager (with assistance, where appropriate, by other Project Team Members) of the Project Issues/Action Items register. This is a working session to ensure a common understanding of each issue, agree that there is a credible resolution path, and to have agreement from participating
parties in resolution activities. A scribe from the Project Team records new and modified action items identified during the discussion.

iv. Revisit Overall the Project Prognosis. The Project Manager summarizes the prognosis for project success taking into account current project status, the severity/impact of issues facing the project and any concerns raised during the review. The purpose of this action is to be certain that the Project Manager, as well as review attendees, are clear in their understanding of the project status and the actions needed to ensure project success.

v. Recap Significant Action Items. The Project Manager summarizes the most significant three to five action items (or action item updates) on the revised Project Issues/Action Items Register (as modified during the review meeting). These items are recording on the project’s standard Project Issues/Action Items Register. The Project Manager validates with the Review Meeting Attendees that the exit criteria has been satisfied.

vi. Metrics Collection. The Program Controller surveys each attendee to collect the metrics identified in the Process Prologue on Page i of this process document.

e. Publish Review Results. The Project Manager publishes significant decisions (made during the review), the revised Project Issues/Action Items Register, and the project prognosis in the next written Project Status report.

4. Exit Criteria: This process is completed when the review meeting has concluded with agreement on a commitment to resolve significant project issues, and all significant action items are published in the project’s standard Project Issues/Action Items Register.