

Establishing a Portfolio Baseline to Assess Performance and Consistency

This talk was at a portfolio management conference and addressed the fundamentals of engagement around governance and management. I took a bit of a different tact from most of the talks I see on this, in that I did not approach it as a case study, but rather a focus on the fundamentals which I feel are too often missed in the pursuit of the “next best technique” or tool.

The conference was in February of 2019, delivered in Philadelphia PA. The main points covered the following:

1. Defining metrics to assess low performing versus high performing projects to maximize ROI
2. Cultivating sound project governance at each stage gate for review
3. Determining appropriate structure to enable opportunities and strategic execution
4. Consistently evaluating project performance to re-allocate resources to better performing projects

I led the deck with the following statement

Undertaking a portfolio baseline assumes a clear understanding of the value of the exercise and the intended outcome of the exercise.

This opened the discussion to focus on the foundation of the exercise, meaning having the challenging conversation with your team, leadership and business you are supporting to really align on **WHY** you are expending the effort and **What the Outcome** should be.

I kept the slide content light, and used the deck as just an anchor for a frank discussion on the core elements to think through in the portfolio governance process – the religion of what tool, exactly how to measure and other sticking points I left to the other presenters as I wanted to keep the focus on the core value. As I mentioned, I am not a fan of “chasing the process” or the next shiny thing, nor am I a fan of wasted effort for efforts sake. If a team is planning to establish a governance process, there is a buy in that is required across all stake holders – without this buy in, there is actually a negative impact from a portfolio governance exercise.