

Thether pharmaceutical or biotechnology companies are focused on digital transformation, data quality and governance, supply chain efficiencies, or conducting a clinical trials launch, they will need skilled and effective project "quarterbacks" who can mobilize and manage a diverse team, synthesize tasks and processes, and seamlessly monitor the entire project from start to finish.

In other words, an effective project leader ensures that both the team and the projects stay on track and achieve their intended outcomes.

But a recent RGP survey revealed that project execution in life sciences has never been more challenging. What's more, mission-critical projects are failing at a significant rate. A sparse 13% of survey respondents indicated that their projects have met or achieved their goals since 2020. And 30% said most of their projects have underperformed.

One of the biggest factors contributing to this troubling failure rate was a lack of capable project leaders. For life sciences companies to achieve better project execution and more significant project performance, these organizations need to invest in strong project leaders who have a variety of skills and abilities to confidently lead diverse teams, while keeping projects moving forward to completion.

Here are five important ways that strong project leaders enable the successful execution of your mission-critical life sciences projects:

### 1. Strong Project Leaders Take a Strategic View

Strategic project management in life sciences is, at its core, a relentless battle against risks and challenges that can derail multi-million-dollar projects. And while many life sciences organizations typically embark on dozens of projects at a time, without effective leadership, these projects can be duplicative and inefficient.

Effective project leaders serve as the driving force behind a successful team while maintaining a clear trajectory toward a successful outcome. A good project leader takes the long view by orchestrating and synchronizing the various project elements, identifying bottlenecks, aligning priorities, determining workflows among team members, and addressing issues and complexities that may arise.

Maintaining a strategic and holistic bird's eye view of all the moving pieces of the project will ultimately accelerate and improve the organization's efforts, and a strong project leader will ensure that this is achieved.

## 2. Strong Project Leaders Centralize Project Coordination

In life sciences, organizations often find themselves juggling numerous projects simultaneously. Without proper oversight, these projects can become redundant, inefficient — or even counterproductive. To address these challenges, central coordination of the project by a strong project leader is imperative. To effectively meet this goal, project leaders will create a dynamic, centralized project management team.

This team will be responsible for overseeing the project by identifying synergistic opportunities, optimizing efficiencies, and aligning and prioritizing project deliverables. The project leader also will ensure that resources are allocated judiciously, and issues and complexities are resolved promptly while breaking down silos that can hinder progress.

devise strategies to lessen or eliminate them.

3. Strong Project Leaders Manage Risks In a field as ever-changing as life sciences, risks are inevitable. Effective project completion relies on proactive risk management strategies. Risk assessment involves not

Project leaders must also allocate resources appropriately, develop contingency plans, and take preventative measures should unforeseen risks arise. Smart project leaders also will conduct regular risk assessment meetings and continuously monitor projects to ensure that risks are reasonably managed throughout the initiative.

only identifying risksimpleme but also analyzing their potential impact on the organization. Project leaders must be able to quickly identify potential roadblocks and

## 4. Strong Project Leaders Are Adaptable

In a sector driven by innovation and constantly evolving regulations, rigidity will impede progress. Strong project leaders who embrace flexibility and adaptability are more likely to successfully support project teams in meeting crucial deadlines and pivoting when necessary. This flexibility in project leadership is critical in a field

# 5. Strong Project Leaders Prioritize Collaboration and Communication

Strong project leaders know that successful completion of life sciences projects relies on effective collaboration and communication among diverse teams, many of which can be comprised of people inside and outside of the organization.

challenge to be a huge degree. To help lessen these communication and collaboration challenges, project leaders should hold regular status meetings, issue progress reports, and have open forums

In our survey, 46% of respondents reported that coordinating people from multiple firms on the project team was challenging to a large degree; 10% reported the

for discussions, so that everyone remains on the same page in addressing problems collectively. A strong project leader also will encourage clear communication, regular updates, and transparent sharing of project information across the team to foster a sense of unity among team members, company leadership, and external stakeholders, while remaining aligned with company expectations. In life sciences, where innovation and progress can mean the difference between success and failure, effective project

who can smoothly navigate challenges, coordinate diverse teams, solve problems quickly, and ensure that projects stay on time and within budget. By centralizing project coordination, managing risks, adopting a flexible and adaptable approach, and prioritizing cooperation, project leaders can enhance their project completion rates while driving success and revenue. Life sciences organizations should make every effort to have a strong project leader at the helm of their most mission-

The complexity and significance of most pharmaceutical and biotechnology initiatives demand skilled project leaders

management is non-negotiable. And the journey from project initiation to successful completion is fraught with

where changes in regulations, compliance or outcomes can quickly change or unexpectedly reshape project requirements.

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