Lessons Learned from the PMMM Research Series[1]

Maturity Evolution: Benchmark Organizations in Project Management[2]

Case: Reta Engineering

By Tulio Duarte Faria

Reta Engenharia (Reta Engineering) is a Brazilian company specializing in engineering consulting, planning, and project management, with a strong presence in industrial projects, infrastructure, and capital-intensive projects. Throughout its history, it has participated in more than 420 projects, with a total estimated CapEx of over US$200 billion. Its portfolio encompasses feasibility studies, strategic planning, contract management, cost control, and implementation of methodologies such as FEL, AACE, and PMBOK.

Reta's culture is based on technical excellence, professional ethics, and a commitment to results. The company values building trusting relationships with its clients, guided by transparency, collaboration, and shared responsibility. Its multidisciplinary team works in an integrated and performance-oriented manner, seeking solutions that balance deadlines, costs, quality, and sustainability in each project.

1 – The importance of the Prado-PMMM Model for the evolution of Project Management Maturity at Reta Engenharia

Original Situation

Reta Engenharia was founded to become the most efficient and reliable link between project design and final delivery. Throughout its 30-year history, the company has built a strong market presence by continuously improving its management methodologies, ensuring excellence in the oversight and execution of highly complex projects.

[1] *The Project Management Maturity series of articles by Prof Darci Prado is based on his extensive research on this topic in Brazil and other countries. Darci is the developer of the Prado Project Management Maturity Model which has been successfully implemented by many organizations in Brazil. More about this model and related research can be found at. https://maturityresearch.com/en/home-en/*

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Its multisectoral approach has enabled the development of tailored strategies aligned with the specific needs of each client's business model. This has promoted personalized management practices that reflect the client's strategic objectives. In this context, Reta has expanded its use of agile methodologies and modern management tools, emphasizing value creation, process efficiency, and the elimination of excessively bureaucratic or merely formal procedures.

In its early years, the company's operations were heavily influenced by the construction sector, reflecting the background of its founders. This initial focus brought significant advantages, especially in technical and execution aspects. However, to expand its reach and offer comprehensive solutions throughout the entire project lifecycle, it became necessary to evolve in other aspects of project management.

In this context, adopting the Project Management Maturity Model (Prado-MMGP) was crucial for diagnosing the company's current status and guiding a structured development plan. The initial application of the survey revealed strong adherence to technical and information technology dimensions, but also highlighted significant gaps in methodology, strategy, and organizational structure. By the end of 2010 the company achieved a maturity index near 3. This result served as a wake-up call: consistent investment in processes, people, and technologies would be necessary to sustain the desired growth.

Structuring Actions for Growth

Faced with this scenario, the company embarked on a transformational process. Significant investments were made in training the team, with a special focus on PMP (Project Management Professional) certification. As a result, approximately 20% of engineers became certified, driving the adoption of robust methodologies and improving project delivery.

At the same time, a decisive investment was made in cutting-edge technological tools. The introduction of Primavera P6, starting in the 2010s, and 4D BIM starting in 2014, positioned the company at the forefront of project planning and control in Brazil.

Research Results after Implementation of Actions

The results of these efforts are tangible. In 2021, the company achieved a Prado-MMGP maturity index of **4.37**—one of the highest in Brazil (see Figures 1 and 2). This achievement contributed directly to the company's solid and sustainable growth, deeper relationships with strategic clients, and increased competitiveness.

Figure 1 – Score by level – Maturity Evaluation 2021

Figure 2 – Dimensions Adherence – Maturity Evaluation 2021

By consistently investing in project management maturity, the company not only raised its internal standards but also strengthened its position as a benchmark in the engineering and consulting sector.

2 - Organizational Results Achieved - Company Growth and PMO Structuring

In recent years, Reta Engenharia has experienced consistent growth, fueled by client trust, the reliable delivery of projects with high technical and managerial standards, and the rising maturity level in the projects it leads (see Figure 3). This progress has established the company as a leading national reference in engineering consulting for industrial, infrastructure, and capital-intensive projects. The expansion of its geographic presence and the diversification of its portfolio reflect a strategic positioning centered on operational excellence, innovation, and value creation throughout the project execution chain.

Figure 3 – Company Billing Growth

Corporate PMO Structuring

Drawing on insights from the Prado-MMGP Model research, Reta was able to strategically plan its maturity evolution. The company structured its **Corporate PMO (Project Management Office)** to standardize methodologies, strengthen governance, and enhance predictability and control throughout the project lifecycle.

Acting as the strategic core of the organization, the PMO provides technical support to project teams, consolidates performance indicators, and ensures alignment with international best practices. This structure has been fundamental in advancing project management maturity and sustaining the company's growth in a cohesive, integrated, and results-driven manner.

3 - PMO Operating Model

Reta Engenharia's PMO operates as a corporate structure that provides strategic, technical, and methodological support to all of the company's projects and contracts. Its central role is to ensure standardized processes, reliable information, and consistent delivery quality—regardless of the project's size, sector, or location.

To fulfill this role, the PMO works transversally across the organization, supporting field teams and contract managers with tools, guidelines, and continuous monitoring. It also conducts periodic training sessions, systematic technical reviews, and internal audits to ensure that corporate standards are properly applied—and adapted when necessary—to the specific requirements of each project. This model enables Reta to maintain a high level of delivery reliability, even in complex and dynamic environments.

Methodologies and Standards

Drawing from the world's leading project management frameworks, Reta's PMO has developed and maintains more than 120 procedures, standards, and documentation templates. These tools guide teams from the initial planning stages through project completion. The materials are based on best practices promoted by internationally recognized organizations, including:

- Project Management Institute (PMI)
- Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering (AACE International)
- Construction Industry Institute (CII)
- Global Alliance for the Project Professions (GAPPS)

The PMO tools are applied **adaptively**, respecting the specific characteristics of each project and business model. This flexibility enables tailored application without compromising governance or technical rigor. The PMO structure also fosters integration between technical and administrative areas, encourages a culture of lessons learned, and maintains a robust system of performance indicators. As a result, all contracts follow clear, auditable standards oriented towards value generation for the client.

4 – Critical Success Factors

To support the evolution of project management and achieve the expected results through its Corporate PMO, Reta Engenharia adopted a solid approach based on strategic and operational pillars that became critical success factors. This model was built through integrated initiatives and institutional commitment, ensuring legitimacy, clear direction, and effectiveness throughout the PMO's implementation.

Among the key factors that contributed to these achievements, the following stand out:

- Strong senior leadership engagement – including the CEO, directors, and superintendents, who were actively involved in the structuring, implementation, and consolidation of the PMO.
- Commitment from the technical management team, which proactively adopted the best practices and guidelines established by the PMO.
- Highly qualified technical staff, with professionals experienced in process standardization, procedure development, and the application of internationally recognized methodologies.
- An organizational culture focused on continuous improvement, promoting innovation, learning, and a constant pursuit of excellence.
- Ongoing investment in training, with workshops, development programs, and technical and managerial education initiatives.

- Systematic use of performance indicators, allowing for real-time monitoring, informed decision-making, and increased predictability in project execution.

5 – Challenges

During the process of structuring and consolidating the PMO at Reta Engenharia, progress was steady and ultimately successful. However, some specific challenges were encountered along the way — all of which were addressed effectively.

Among the aspects that required greater attention, the following stood out:

- **Alignment across different areas** – Efforts were needed to promote integration between technical, administrative, and operational teams.
- **Adapting procedures to varied contract profiles** – It was essential to preserve flexibility while maintaining governance and standardization.
- **Continuous team development** – This required planned investments in training and a maturation period for the full assimilation of new practices.

These challenges provided valuable lessons, reinforcing the importance of adaptability, structured implementation, and long-term vision when building a project management culture.

6 – Benefits

The consolidation of the PMO at Reta Engenharia has generated a range of concrete benefits, enhancing efficiency, predictability, and quality in project management. These results emerged gradually but consistently and reflect the team's strong engagement, the company's technical maturity, and the disciplined application of established methodologies.

The main gains observed include:

- Improved productivity, standardization, and delivery quality – Promoting greater operational efficiency, technical consistency, and uniformity in project management across departments.
- Greater predictability and project control – Supported by robust performance indicators that enable faster, more informed decisions with a lower margin of error.
- Enhanced communication across departments and stakeholders – Enabled by structured workflows, standardized terminology, and integrated processes.
- Reduced rework and mitigation of operational risks – Achieved through the rigorous application of planning, control, and critical analysis practices.
- Higher client satisfaction – Resulting from more consistent project deliveries that meet deadlines and comply with technical and contractual requirements.

- A strengthened performance and learning culture – With a focus on results, lessons learned, and the ongoing technical development of teams.

7 – Conclusions

The structuring of the PMO at Reta Engenharia marked a major milestone in the company's journey toward process improvement and increased project management maturity. Anchored in well-established practices and supported by strong institutional alignment, the company successfully overcame specific challenges and consolidated a structure capable of delivering greater efficiency, predictability, and quality.

The result is a more prepared and integrated organization, focused on generating value in highly complex projects. Many of the company's most important steps toward maturity in project management were guided by the diagnosis provided by the maturity research model developed by Professor Darci Prado.

About the Author

Tulio Duarte Faria is the General Manager of New Business Development. He holds a degree in Civil Engineering from UFMG, a specialization in Finance, and an Executive MBA from Fundação Dom Cabral.

Important
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