



From no PMO to one system

Building project management at Opus Inspection, from scratch

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Multiple companies, five ways of working

Opus grew fast through mergers and acquisitions. Every company we brought in kept its own tools and its own habits. Nothing connected, and nothing rolled up.



MS Project



Excel



Word



Email



Homegrown apps

No PMO

No lifecycle

No policies

No PPM tool

And no single place to see what the company had committed to.

The contract that changed everything

“We won the work and started delivering before we really knew what was expected.”

A major state program



One person held the whole plan

Our PM knew the technology and the teams. She had no clear view of what was due, when, or who had it.



The project outgrew the team

We added people to help. Other projects quietly slipped, and nobody could size the damage.

Estimate: 1 yr/10,000 hrs, Actuals: 4 yr/100,000 hrs



Promises assumed an empty backlog

Dates were committed as if that contract were the only work Opus had going on.

What it cost us



Time

Schedules slipped on projects that had nothing to do with the contract we were rescuing.



Budget

Rework and redirected resources burned hours nobody had planned or funded.



Credibility

With Opus leadership, and contract administrators we answer to.



Visibility

We could not size any of it, because we could not see across projects at all.

None of this was a tool problem yet. It was a visibility problem.

JUNE 2025 · DAY ONE

The first thing I fixed was knowing who we had contracts with, and which ones had active/upcoming work.

No tool. No process. A list. Everything else was built on top of it.



Choosing the tool on purpose



01

Budget first

Before I accepted the role, I made sure there was money to build the structure the job description implied.



02

Three vendors

A written business case, then a side-by-side evaluation of capability, strengths, opportunities and cost.



03

Clarity signed

September 2025. One year ago this month. Eight years of prior Clarity experience helped, but it still had to win.

The evaluation mattered more than my preference. It is what made the decision defensible to everyone who had to live with it.

Tool and process grew up together



Clarity, first and intentional

- Stand up the platform
- Load contracts and projects
- Status module on every active project
- Tasks and staffing next



Policy, nearly in parallel

- Policies mapped to our project lifecycle
- Written where the rules were unclear
- Written for where we are going, not only where we are
- Iterated as we learned

Building in parallel let us iterate fast. It also meant we could rarely plant a stake and say "this is the way."
For a company stitched together from many companies, that trade was worth it.

One year in

Project Management Office

6

Project Managers

~10

Projects each

>25

Contracts /
Customers

Across the Organization

8

Acting
Project Managers

~3

Projects each

6

Departments



Status lives in Clarity

Every active project reports status through the Status module.



Leadership reviews from Clarity

Weekly, straight out of the tool. No separate deck to assemble.



Tasks and staffing catching up

Early adopters led. This month the majority of projects reach the same level.



One role, one system

ADO integration is live as an MVP. PMs manage in Clarity, developers execute in ADO.

WHAT ACTUALLY MOVED THE NEEDLE

Getting status in front of leadership, every week.

Not only the status. The journey with it: how the data gets into Clarity, what near term looks like, what long term looks like. Showing the work bought us patience, and patience bought us everything else.



Our policies outran our people



We published faster than we could train and adopt. Some of that was deliberate: policies were written for the way we want to work, not the way we work today. But aspirational policy can land as one more thing you are already failing at.

If I ran it again



Label the future state

Say plainly which policies/procedures describe today, and which describe where we are heading.



Release at absorption speed

Publish on the cadence people can actually train to, not the cadence I can write to.



Pair every policy with a person

A document nobody walks you through is a document nobody follows.

The next twelve months



More people in Clarity

Widen the user base beyond the core project teams, with the rollout and training plan we did not have the first time.



One to two more integrations

Keep extending Clarity toward a single portal instead of another system to update.



Mature the ADO integration

The MVP proved the model. Next comes the feature set that makes it worth more to each role.

Same approach as year one: agile, minimum viable, then add what each role actually asks for.

IF YOU REMEMBER ONE THING

Bring people along. Don't plant a flag.

In an organization built from many organizations, the fastest way to get everyone somewhere new is to walk with them. We grow into the future of project management at Opus together, or not at all.





Questions

Happy to talk about any of it, including the parts that did not work.

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