Jumpstarting a High Performance Org:
Launch Consulting helped a large team manage its rapid growth with a Project Management Office (PMO) and focused workshops to give them a quick ramp.

As the Common Data Services (CDS) Team has grown, its systems and processes haven't kept pace. It needed a solution to break down siloed communication, eliminate redundancies, create consistent messaging, and drive clarity. Launch helped them organize to solve their challenges.

The work the CDS team does is vital to the success of Microsoft and has grown significantly over the years. With the tremendous growth there was an opportunity to evaluate the current state of the team’s processes and routines, identify areas of improvement and implement changes that would benefit the overall team. With this transformation, Microsoft CDS had a need for a Project Management Office (PMO).

A Human Approach: Cultural Fluency
Our goal at the beginning was to take a human-centered approach to arriving at real solutions, where we learned as much as we could about internal processes and used an empathetic approach to understanding the culture, values and day-to-day activities of employees and leadership. Our fluency with Microsoft and internal communication tools helped us quickly understand issues and express empathy for employees and their stakeholders. We combined our deep understanding of internal processes with an analytic approach to provide the best recommendations.

Case Study:

Project Requirements:

- Assess team processes and systems
- Reduce gaps and overlaps
- Establish consistent communications
- Enable the organization to scale

Launch's Solution:
Launch conducted a broad assessment of people, process, systems, and support. This information yielded recommendations to foster collaboration, reduce redundancy and eliminate gaps. Four focused workshops helped the team create a PMO quickly ramp up with best practices, processes and documentation.

Project Results:

- **HOURS PER WEEK SAVED**
  54 meetings reduced to 43 multiplied by # of attendees

- **XX CLIENT HOURS SAVED**
  Increased Content Usage and Reduced Redundancy

- **NEW COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**
  # of new channels opened

"Bringing in the PMO was a huge help in opening our eyes to all the gaps in communication and the duplicative efforts that had become the norm in our long-standing project"

Microsoft CDS Director
Approach:
Launch assessed the team’s overall needs and identified opportunities in the following areas:

**People**
- Roles and responsibilities with team alignment
- Communication (internal and external)
- Coaching and team level set

**Process**
- Roadmap and intake
- Prioritized documentation needs and action plan
- Consistent onboarding

**Action/Support**
- Define new team structure
- Communicate roles and changes that will be coming to the team

Solution:
To address the current state of the team’s needs, Launch proposed creating a Project Management Organization and helped them take these steps to address critical issues.

1. Created a standard communication plan to streamline current inventory of communications to be efficient, effective and purpose driven
2. Created a Roles and Responsibilities Document to provide accountability for delivery of work products and reduce misunderstandings on roles.
3. Work intake form collaboration
4. Create a high level roadmap for the project/program
5. Capacity planning
6. Create and update documentation
7. Identify any single points of failure: make resource document what they know. Identify a resource to do the work with SPoF to mentor (not do) the work.
8. Hire a full time Program Manager/Sr PM
9. Identify Best Practices & how we can use tools/processes across the company for efficiency

Real Life Outcomes:
Launch gave the PMO a quick start through a 4-part workshop to create the foundational documents that help run a healthy project team:

**RACI**
- Roles within the team
- Responsibilities to execute the work
- Accountability for the task
- Who is responsible, consulted, and informed
- Assign roles to names

**Communications plan**
- Define a current state communications plan
- Review and ensure the plan is efficient and complete
- Ensure key Rhythm of business is defined

**Stakeholder analysis**
- Internal and external team members and the engagement of the team

**Risk & issues log**
- One place to document/track project issues and risks

About Microsoft:
The mission of Microsoft is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

About Launch Consulting:
Founded in 2005, Launch is a veteran-owned company that takes a people-first approach to solving complex technology problems with innovative solutions. With over 500 technology leaders, designers, and engineers, they consistently push the boundaries of commonplace.

Core Practice Areas:
Human Experience Design, Data Platform, and Cloud – seamlessly combined by a Technology Concierge team to craft the transformative approach so often marketed but rarely delivered. Based in Bellevue, WA, they have regional offices in key markets across the nation, including Dallas, San Francisco, and Washington D.C.

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